



# The Poet-Saints Of Mahārāshtra

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DNYĀNESHVAR  
THE OUT-CASTE BRĀHMIN

BY  
THE REV J F EDWARDS,  
POONA

1941

*Price Rupees Three*





## PREFACE

1 With the whole world in flames and the very skies crashing down death it may seem trivial to inquire into the life and teaching of one who died six and a half centuries ago. But since it is agreed that the 'total war' now raging is in the last analysis a war of ideas, it will also be agreed that soldiers, sailors and airmen are not the only combatants. As the tragic conflict unfolds itself we are learning anew how basic to the life of humanity is religion *if it ensures worthy ideas of God and man*. Therefore the inquiry in this book, instead of being trivial is of unusual importance. The only justifiable reason for anyone writing on such a subject at such a time is to quicken and sustain the moral and spiritual life of the race for if the ideas set forth in such a book succeed they will become vital forces in building that Kingdom of God which is righteousness and peace and joy during one of the crucial periods in human history.

2. This twelfth volume in the Poet Saints Of Mahārashtra Series has taken up all the time we could give to it ever since the publication in 1935 of the eleventh volume, *Nectar From Indian Saints* and we are three or four years behind the schedule we fixed when nine years ago we accepted the task of continuing this Series. The reason for the delay is to be found partly in the prior claims of daily Marathi lectures to theological students and of editing the English columns of a joint Mission weekly but even more in the profound and baffling character of every aspect of the subject. We knew we were well nigh attempting the impossible in aiming as a non Indian at illumining for non Indian readers one of the greatest geniuses in the encyclopaedic history of Hinduism. We have been so haunted with the impossibility of any non Indian writer doing even approximate justice to the subject, that on several occasions we have all but given up the task.

3. Even so, those Indian scholars who are acquainted with the vastness and profundity of Dnyāneshwar's writings will have their charity strained to the utmost as they survey the fragmentary character of this volume. To mention only one point Of Dnyāneshwar's greatest Marāthī poem, the *Dnyāneshwarī*, the greatest poem indeed in the entire range of Marāthī literature, our book has translated only one chapter, the last one, out of eighteen chapters, its 1,810 verses being only one-fifth of the 9,000 verses which make up this marvellous poem. Two draft English translations of these 1,810 verses fell into our hands after the death of Dr. Justin Abbott on June 19, 1932 and the death of Pandit N. R. Godbole on February 16, 1934, each had prepared his own translation, and as it seems to have been the last piece of work done by the American scholar whose frame was worn out by much suffering, and by the able Indian Pandit before his last illness, there was left remaining to us the task not only of comparing the translations with the Marāthī original and of modifying them accordingly, but also of choosing between their two English renderings or of weaving them together; sometimes we have done one, sometimes the other. The same processes had to be followed in chapter XII in preparing the two renderings of Dnyāneshwar's 'Call To Prayer' on pp 276-286. Imperfect as must be the result of our efforts in the English rendering of the *Dnyāneshwarī*, chapter XVIII, printed in our chapter XI, pp. 142-275, it would have been very much more imperfect but for the help we have received from those two invaluable Marāthī commentators, Sākhare and Bankat-swāmī, see our introductory Note to the 11th chapter on page 142. Another portion received from the skilful hands of Dr. Abbott is seen in most of what is printed on pp 53-55; and Pandit Godbole left in manuscript form most of chapters VII and VIII, pp. 77-97, and section 2 of chapter XXI, p 376. Another pillar on which we have leaned heavily has been supplied.

by the two Marathi volumes on Dnyaneshwar published by the Dnyāneshwar Mandal after the Nevastā celebrations in 1934 which have given us most of the basic material for chapters XIII XIV and XV. While most gratefully acknowledging the high value of these two Marathi volumes, we may be pardoned for urging that in a new edition the system of page numbers may be corrected and made continuous. The extensive nature of our indebtedness in almost every section is further indicated by the authorities quoted throughout the book these references we have inserted in the text instead of giving them in the form of footnotes. For the patient co-operation of all at the Āryabhusan Press and the competent advice on numerous points by Shastri Y. E. Dhāyagude we are specially grateful. And last but by no means least the completion of this task would have been quite impossible had it not been for the generous assistance given by our two Indian Christian friends the Rev. Dr. B. P. Hivāle and Pandit Nārāyan Laxman Harshe. The rich scholarship of these two brethren has left its mark all through the book but for all opinions expressed we must accept the sole responsibility.

4 In conclusion we would call the reader's special attention to the *Corrigenda* pages (xxx-xxxii) and to our Epilogue on 'The Unscaled Everest Of Marathi Literature', pages 502-8.

5 And now to quote Dnyaneshwar's own dedicatory words from his 18th chapter verses 1794-1795 may God the Soul of the universe, be pleased by this my offering of words and grant me the favour that the crookedness of the wicked shall vanish that a love for good actions may be created in them and that all beings shall treat one another with an increasing love.

September 1941  
United Theological College  
of Western India,  
Poona

J. F. Edwards



# POET SAINTS OF MAHĀRĀSHTRA

## VOLUME XII

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## CORRIGENDA

Page 9 Line 19: *for* all, *read* all."

Page 50 Lines 25-28: *for* see chapter VI (11) *read*  
pp. 63, 76, 85, 91, 95

Page 99 Last line · *add*

On p. 153 of his book Mr M D Altekār takes a very similar view regarding the *Abhangs* as Principal Patwardhan

Page 136 Line 14 *add*

On p 272 in his book Mr. M. D. Altekār emphasizes that Dnyāneshwar was no believer in 'blind *bhakti*' or 'blind faith,' see also Altekār's page 3. On his p. 315, summarizing Dnyāneshwar's *bhakti* message' Mr. Altekār stresses the absence from it of ambiguity. Its main emphasis is on character, penance and unselfishness, the fruits of action must be dedicated to supreme spiritual purposes, and life must be inspired by mercy.

Page 145 Footnote *for* section 5. *read* page 463.

Page 313 Line 1 *after* to us,' *add* as Footnote

Lokamānya Bāl Gangādhār Tilak once wrote to Gāndhījī as follows. 'Politics is a game of worldly people and not of *sādhus* (saints), and instead of the maxim, conquering anger by love, . . I prefer to rely on the maxim of Shrī Kṛishna "Do unto others as they do unto you,"'

Page 319 Page-heading . *for* Mīs. *read* MRS

Page 342 Line 13 · *add*

On p. 9 of his book Mr. M. D. Altekār points out that Mr. M. G. Rānade over-emphasizes the religious side

of the *bhakti* movement while Mr V K Rajwade over emphasizes its patriotic aspect, altogether too much importance being given to Ramdas but that Dayaneshwar combines the patriotic and the religious as parts of a rounded whole.

Page 346 Line 11 *add* The Rev Dr M P Davis in *The N C C Review* (September 1941 p 436) states Regarding Sir Radhakrishnan's philosophizing about caste and window dressing it and sugar-coating it for the modern mind, no one can expose the weakness of this philosopher's argument better than a fellow-countryman. Mr K M Pannikar Foreign Minister of Patiala, in his book *Hinduism In The Modern World* (1938),.. tearing away all idealistic and oratorical dressings, refutes the claims of "the Brahmin apologists of caste. He resents the attitude of Brahmin sophists like Sir Radhakrishnan, who discourse on the

Page 441 Line 4 *for* 144, 269 *read* 69

Page 441 Line 22: *for* see pp. . . ), *read* see pp. 453-5 )

Page 446 Line 3 *for* play-acting, *read* play-acting, '

Page 446 Line 12: *add*

On *Yoga* Mr M. D. Altekar (see his pp. 136-138 & 193) shows that Dnyāneshwar insists a true *Yogī* must be, and if true to his name always is, unerringly correct in his moral behaviour and ideal

Page 446 Line 26. *for* reveal himself, *read* reveal Himself.

Page 469 Line 9. *for* book-tovers *read* book-lovers

Page 470 Line 6 *for* Appendix *read* Appendix A

. Page 477 After Line 14. *add* A Poona Sanskrit scholar, however, affirms that the 'prefix A' is not used as meaning 'intense' but as meaning 'a little.'

Page 479 Line 12 *after* 'āśramas?' *add* Later *Guardian* articles on this subject fail to convince us.

Page 488 Line 6. *for* see Appendix *read* see p. 497 for a further meaning.

Page 488 Line 16: *for* this very *read* the great

Page 491 Title. *for* APPENDIX *read* APPENDIX A

„ „ After Title. *add* (see pp. 64-67 and 487)

Page 496 Last line. *for* giving *read* living

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## PART ONE INTRODUCTORY

### CHAPTER I

#### THE HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF DNYĀNESHVAR

##### 1 The Dominance of Religion in East and West

If non Indians are to penetrate the heart of Dnyāneshwar's life and teaching they need to remember that to this Mahārāshtra Brahmin and Poet Saint of six and a half centuries ago (A D 1271-1296) religion was no side issue but a vital necessity without which life was not worth living. To put it in modern parlance Dnyaneshwar would have profoundly agreed with those five distinguished military men who after the War of 1914-18 are said to have sent to the boys of their old school a joint letter in which they said they had become convinced that no life is complete no kind of life can make the world intelligible or give us any lasting satisfaction unless there enters into it the element which is called religion the desire to find God in the universe and to understand our relation to Him. Guidance and lasting satisfaction are we believe to be found only in faith the assurance that the life of a man progresses by conformity with a Universal Spirit and a divine beauty of character so that every act and preference of every one of us is of immortal consequence, because it either helps or hinders the realization of the order which God is perpetually designing for the world. In other words we must approach the study of Dnyāneshwar's period in Indian history and his

own life and work remembering that, to Dnyāneshwar and the members of his religious circle, God was the essential secret of everything. That he had a different view of the divine from that held today makes no difference to the necessity of bearing in mind his emphasis on the religious and spiritual if we are rightly to understand him and the astonishing influence he has wielded in Mahārāshtrian history.

For *all* our readers, non-Indian and Indian alike, the following story from Indian religious history will illustrate our point. The story was related in a sermon delivered by Professor Kar in the Bombay Prārthanā Samāy in the earlier part of 1940 and was printed in the English columns of *The Subodh Patrikā* to which we are indebted. If we study the lives of India's saints, emphasized the Professor, we learn that God is their secret in everything and that many stories illustrate this. 'One such story is that of the Vaishnava Saint Sanātan. He had renounced the world, giving up immense wealth, power and prestige, and was living a retired life in Brindāvan in religious meditation and contemplation. One evening while he was sitting on the bank of the Jumnā, a man approached him and made obeisance to him. "What can I do for you, my son?" asked the saint. "Sir," replied the man, "I am an indigent Brāhmin. I had much property before; but I have lost everything. I have been praying to the God Shiva to grant me as a boon the secret of wealth. The God appeared to me in a dream and said, 'Go to Sanātan, he knows the secret.' Hence have I come to you." "I have nothing left with me," said the saint; "whatever I had in gold and silver or land, I gave away. I can do nothing for you. I am afraid." The Brāhmin was going away in disappointment, when he was suddenly called back by the saint uttering these words, "Yes, yes, now I remember. Go and dig up the sand over there, you may find something." The Brāhmin began to dig the sand as

directed and his iron spade became converted into gold by the touch of the magic stone. He left the spade and his digging and ran to the saint and said, "Revered Sir, I do not want gold. Do give me something of that treasure the possession of which makes you indifferent even to the magic stone." Yet if we look round us and examine the lives of ordinary men and women, added Professor Kar, we find them living without the guidance and control of faith in God.

From these two incidents, one concerning modern England and the other regarding ancient India, the inference to be drawn is the same, viz. the dominance of religion in the human heart, in East and West alike.

## 2 Sympathetic Study of India's Faiths

One of the most trusted Indian Christian leaders of our day regarding the sympathetic study of India's ancient faiths is Dr A. J Appasāmy who in his various books approaches the task of examining Hinduism in the light of Christian truth in that spirit of Christian humility which is an essential condition for success. In his useful book *What is Moksha?* Dr Appasāmy has these words which are to be commended to every student of Dnyaneshwar — "As we steep our minds in the sacred books of India we see the infinite riches stored up in them: the passionate longing for God, the joy of fellowship with Him, the strong sense of failure, the profound contempt for the passing things of the world, the weariness with all that is unreal, the realization of the supremely exalted character of God who is above speech and even thought, the intimacy of His indwelling presence, the serenity of a life in God. These and other longings and experiences will send us deeper down into Christ and help us to live and work for a fuller realization of His abiding presence." In another passage Dr Appasāmy hands on a suggestion which we are sure will have all kinds of good result if carried out.



‘If we know a Hindu *guru* of spiritual power we should sit at his feet and learn from him. If a deeply religious Hindu friend is in the habit of engaging in meditation at certain times and will allow us, we should meditate with him. When he prays, we should pray with him. When he chants his hymns we should join him. Too long have we considered Hindus as people to whom to lecture, they could teach us much.’ Let us in this teachable and receptive spirit sit at the feet of Dnyāneshwar, let us listen to the throbbing of his heart in passionate and yearning prayer, and let us catch the music of those hymns that have moved the soul of Mahārāshtra for well nigh seven centuries. There is much we shall learn of what Hinduism really means among the people of Western India. E.g., one invaluable discovery we shall make will be that Dnyāneshwar will show exactly what the *Gītā* means when it teaches that *karma*, *bhakti* and *dnyāna*, the three well-known ways of mystic approach in Indian religious tradition, are not mutually exclusive, but are only different aspects of spiritual life. In reality they are only different stages of the path of light.

### 3. Religion in the Early Life of India

If we will approach Dnyāneshwar in the teachable spirit already indicated, there will be a still greater benefit for all non-Indian students, particularly those who have come to India for the purpose of offering missionary help. The benefit will be that of learning what India’s own religion means to millions of India’s people. One of the safest guides on these matters for all missionary students is Dr. Nicol Macnicol who in the decade since he left India has enriched our literature by several works one of which bears the title *The Living Religions Of The Indian People*. ‘In order,’ says Dr. Macnicol, “that we may be able to help any people wisely in what affects them as profoundly as religion does, it is of much importance that we should understand, as far as possible, what religion

has meant to them in their own lives. A real change must come about in the attitude of the student and in his selection of the materials of his study if he directs his attention rather to the actual effects on the lives of men today produced by the religion he is considering. Our aim is to find out how in the India of today the people seek and find satisfaction for their spiritual necessities through the medium of religion and what fashion these religions take under the stress of the actual demands and aspirations of living people. No one indeed can ever say of any religion that it is quite dead, unless he is able to search all the hearts that profess it, and certainly one who comes from outside to study the currents of religious life in India has no right to differentiate the living elements from the dead in the faiths of a land so vast, a land that encloses within the hearts of its millions so immense a variety of needs.

Whatever our view of these things may be, we can certainly affirm that there are religions in India that are alive because they are active within living and desiring hearts. Our aim must be to examine these living religions, so as to see — in so far as we can form a judgment on a matter necessarily to one who studies the subject from without, so obscure and uncertain — what it is in these religions that at the present time appears to bring comfort and to yield satisfying answers to the questions of those who bring to them their problems and their needs. That must be the guiding purpose with which we come to our study. Such a purpose Dr Macnicol keeps steadily in view even when he has to deal with spirit influences surrounding the Hindu village for he is compelled to add that it does not do to count too much on their kindly character.

#### 4. Dnyāneshwar and Present-day India

Lest we be tempted to think that while Dnyāneshwar's religion may have seemed priceless to himself it is of very little practical value to others to-day let us give one more

quotation from Dr Macnicol. Referring to Dnyāneshwar's great poem, the *Dnyāneshwarī*, the former 'Muni of Poona' (as Dr Macnicol has sometimes been called, one of the highest titles that can be bestowed on any scholar) states: 'This poem, which reproduces in Marāthī with much grace of poetic imagery the message of the *Bhagavadgītā*, still seems to find its way to the hearts even of the unlettered people. The writer has seen a company of plain men and women in Poona dispersing after their weekly meeting at which this poem was regularly expounded to them, and he noted how many were women whose shaven heads showed them to be widows, in much need, no doubt, of the comfort and help that they sought from this *bhakti* teacher.' This 'weekly meeting' is still held, over ten years later, and in many parts of the year it is a daily meditation in the heart of busy Poona on the *Dnyāneshwarī* and its message. In order to prepare our minds for the facts and traditional stories regarding Dnyāneshwar's career let us look briefly at the historic and religious background of his life and work.

## 5 Hindu Renaissance Periods

Seeing Dnyāneshwar is regarded by Mahārāshtra as 'the father of Marāthā nationality and Marāthā religion,' it is of interest to ask exactly where Dnyāneshwar appears in the Hindu picture of forty centuries. Professor D. S. Sharmā of Madras considers there have been six periods of renaissance in Hindu history. 'The Upanishads with their message of a universal spiritual religion coming after a long period of complex sacrificial religion of the *Brāhmanas* probably represent the *earliest* renaissance in Hinduism. But as no definite dates can be assigned to this renaissance we may say that it belongs to pre-historic times. Within historical times there came our *next* renaissance in the second century B. C. after the fall of the Mauryan Empire, and as a result of it we have our great didactic epics, the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* including the immortal *Gītā*. The *third* renaissance came in the fourth

century A.D. during the brilliant Gupta period of Indian history. And as a result of it we have those popular scriptures the *Purāṇas* which were designed with the object of educating the masses about Hindu *Dharma*. The *fourth* renascence came in the eighth century A.D., when after a period of confusion following Harsha's death Hinduism absorbed foreign invaders on a vast scale and Rajput kingdoms were established in Hindostān. The finest product of that age was the great Shankarāchārya whose authoritative commentaries on the Upanishads, the Brahma Sūtras and the *Gītā* have given a firm philosophic basis to Hinduism. The *fifth* renascence came in the fourteenth century when as a reaction from the excessive formalism of scholastic philosophy there arose the great *Bhakti* schools of Rāmānanda and Kabir in Northern India. The *sixth* renascence amidst which we are living today may be said to have begun in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. There is good reason to believe that Dnyāneshwar by means of his unique poem the *Dnyāneshwari* with its nine thousand verses, may have been one of the chief factors in the fifth renascence which consisted in a *bhakti* reaction against the formalism of philosophy. For Dnyāneshwar's poem had been written only a few years before, and this fifth renascence may possibly have been one of the firstfruits of the rare influence of that poem.

## 6 Saints and Scriptures of Mahārāshtra

How this *bhakti* evolution appeared in the religious history of Western India has been clearly set forth by the late Honourable Dr Sir Narāyan G. Chandavarkar, a notable student of *bhakti* and the first President of the reformed Bombay Legislative Council. In a masterly Foreword with which Sir Narāyan honoured our book on Tukārām in December 1921 Sir Narāyan wrote as follows — Borrowing the best and discarding the rest from the Vedas, the Upanishads and Buddha, the saints of India gave her and the world the

following definition of Truth "Truth is *sama darshana*," i. e., "Truth is loving others as thy own self." Because *Rīta*, the law of righteousness, . . . flowed from Brahma as Truth, the Saints identified *Rīta* with Truth and called falsehood *Aurīta*, that which is not *Rīta*. Because the Upanishads defined Truth as the Soul residing in man's heart, they held that it is the Soul which binds us all through the Over-Soul, God, and therefore is the seat of Love. Hence Truth is Love. This definition of Truth as *Love of others as thy own self* is given in the *Bhāgavata Purāna* which is universally regarded as the standard authority of the devotional school second only to the *Bhagavadgītā* or the Celestial Song, worshipped as India's New Testament. In several places the *Bhāgavata Purāna* expressly declares that he is the highest *Yogī* (man of contemplation and action) who looks upon and treats others as his own self. Taking up that teaching Dnyāneshwar, the premier saint of Mahārāshtra, to whom all succeeding saints thereof, including Tukārām, owed a good deal of their religion, and who is regarded as the progenitor of Marāthā nationality, which culminated in the great Shivājī's Marāthā Empire, declared that there is no acquisition equal to that of *Samāya*, i. e., the power of regarding others and treating them as your own self. If we interpret that by the light of the texts in the Upanishads and the books of our Saints, which say that there is nothing higher than or even equal to Truth, we come to the same idea of Truth as that defined in the *Bhāgavata Purāna*. That is made clear beyond doubt by Shivājī's spiritual adviser, Saint Rāmdās, who defined Truth in the Marāthī language of Western India as *Ananyapana*, i. e., "the condition of loving others as thy own self." These Saints revered the Vedas and the Upanishads but they declared that those scriptures were *partial* to the three twice-born castes, and that they neglected women and the lowest fourth caste called *Shūdra* (or servile), consisting of persons whose lot it was to serve the former, remain in ignorance and live a life of servility. The Mahārāshtra Saint, Dnyāneshwar,

himself a Brāhmin, who lived in the thirteenth century after Christ, says in his poetic gloss on the *Bhagavadgītā* which preaches the doctrine of devotion to God as the highest and the easiest way to salvation because it is open to all, not merely to the twice-born but to women and *Shūdras* as well. The *Bhagavadgītā* is but the Vedas transformed into liberality. Therefore it is superior to the Vedas. True, the Veda is wealthy but there is no miser like him and that because he whispered his doctrines into the ears of the three twice-born castes only. And then he sat quiet, pretending he had no time to communicate his secret to people like women and *Shūdras* who are distressed by the pain and the miseries of this life and its cares. But methinks that, as time wore on, the Veda's conscience pricked him and exposed to him his own littleness. Therefore, feeling that he should cast off and acquire true glory he proclaimed himself to all classes and castes, even to women and *Shūdras* without distinction. So he, the Veda, took the form of the *Bhagavadgītā* and brought salvation to all. These Saints further taught that the golden age for India is not in the past but in the present and the future. \*

## 7 Mahārāshtra's Early History

At the All-India History Congress held at Allāhābād in October 1938 Mr V. K. Bhāve, B. A. Assistant Editor of the Poona *Kesari*, author of the work *Peshwekālīn Mahārāshtra* gave an informing paper in which he pointed out the term Mahārāshtra is found as far back as 246 B. C. In a work on *Kāmasūtras* by Vātsāyan dated about 400 A. D. the boundaries are so described as to show they have remained unchanged for the past 1500 years. The exact period when the Marāṭhī language came into being is unknown. Under the pre-Muslim Hindu rulers modern languages were mostly

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Foreword by Sir N. G. Chandavarkar to *The Life and Teaching of Tukaram* by Fraser and Edwards pp xvii-xx

neglected. The only language which was patronised by them was Sanskrit. As to Mahārāshtra it was ruled by sovereigns who were non-Mahārāshtrians. From the second century onward Mahārāshtra was under no one sovereign power till the advent of the Chālukyas of Badāmī in the eighth century. The Chālukyas having their residence in the Karnātak were not Mahārāshtrians. They ruled for more than two hundred years and were succeeded by the Rāshtrakūtas of Mālkhed. Canarese was the language of the Rāshtrakūtas, which goes to prove that they came from the South and were not Mahārāshtrians. Their power came to an end in the 10th century making way for the Chālukyas of Kalyān who were also not Mahārāshtrians. After the Chālukyas the Yādavs came into power. 'They had lived in the Deccan since the time of the Rāshtrakūtas as their tributaries. Modern Sinnar formerly called Shrīnagar in the Nasik District had been their headquarters. By tradition and lineage the Yādavs belonged to Karnatak. Many of their big military officers were recruited from Karnatak. The main difference between the Yādavs and other Hindu sovereigns of Mahārāshtra rests in the fact that the Yādavs had permanently settled in Mahārāshtra making Devgiri their capital, while the other Hindu sovereigns had made Karnatak their abode. Mahārāshtra because of its being the home of the Yādavs derived many advantages from them. The Marāthī language to a certain extent thrived and became capable of producing great poetical works like the *Dnyāneshwari* and the well known Mahānubhāv literature. The Mahārāshtrians gained access to administration and various branches of knowledge. Devgiri formed a centre of learning, art and culture in the midst of Mahārāshtra, attracting men of great attainments and scholarship from all parts of India. Astronomy, Astrology, Mathematics, Theology, Medicine, Music, and Statecraft received encouragement from the Yādavs.'

## 8 Mahārāshtra's Golden Age

The towering personality of the times was Hemadri continues Mr V. K. Bhave 'A great administrator and organizer he founded an institution through which was completed a very great work—nothing less than an Encyclopedia helpful to the moral, material and metaphysical progress of humanity. He is also credited with the introduction of a special style in temple architecture and of a Modi script in Marathi though his invention of Modi is doubtful. A large number of Brahmins who had received an education at Devgiri and other places in a trilogy and theology were donated with lands and induced to settle in villages as Jothis and Kulkarnis of whom the former looked after the spiritual and moral welfare of the people while the latter carried on the administrative work of the State. Thus the Yadav period was really a golden period in the history of Maharashtra. But it was after all a short period covering only one hundred and twenty five years and it was followed by the ruthless rule of the Muslims in which all moral, material and cultural activities of the Maharashtrais came to a standstill for nearly three centuries and a half.

## 9 Marāthī Language and Literature

On this subject the veteran Marathi Brahmin author and former editor of the Marathi newspaper the *Kesari* Mr N. C. Kelkar has placed us all heavily in his debt by a luminous address delivered as President of the Marathi section at the Tenth All India Oriental Conference which was held on March 21, 1910 at Tirupati and was published in *The Mahratta* to which we are indebted. In what he called a rapid survey Mr Kelkar dealt with Marathi as a language and then glanced at the various periods of Marathi literature. As this is the latest and most authoritative deliverance on the subject we cannot do better than quote useful portions. Assuming that



the number of prevalent modern provincial vernacular languages in India is about fifteen, it can be claimed that Marāṭhī takes the fourth rank. The first three are Hindi or Hindustani, Bengālī and Telugū. The Hindi having 120 millions of people and Bengālī fifty millions of people, easily outdistance Marāṭhī. But Telugū with its 26 millions of adherents can be regarded as nearly falling in the same rank as Marāṭhī with its 21 millions. While 6 per cent of the total population of India is Marāṭhī-speaking, about 8 per cent of the total Indian territory may be regarded as Mahārāshtra territory. It is believed that about 1,400,000 of people in India use Marāṭhī as a subsidiary language. Mr Kelkar affirms that 'Marāṭhī can be traced and has been traced back to the fifth century A D, with the aid of a supposed reference to it in the *Nārada Smṛiti*. Then definite Marāṭhī words, and fragments of Marāṭhī sentences, have been discovered in stone inscriptions and copper plates carved in the 7th century. Great importance is attached in this respect to the stone inscription discovered at the famous temple at Shravan Belgol in the Mysore territory, which is dated 983 A D. The course of the Marāṭhī language begins to run smoothly from the tenth or eleventh century, as can be definitely stated from researches in the Mahānubhāvī literature of that period.'

## 10. The Illustrious 'Dnyāneshwarī' as Pioneer

'At last the 13th century is signalised by the illustrious *Dnyāneshwarī*, which was a pioneer of the classical Marāṭhī poetry,' says Mr Kelkar, 'and still holds its place as a premier work of literature combining a treasure of spiritual knowledge and a marvellous display of the keenest poetical spirit. Not only is the earliest Marāṭhī literature to be found in poetry, but poetry held the field for about six centuries afterwards. Dnyāneshwar flourished at a time when the Yādav Marāṭhā Kings ruled at Devgiri (or Daulatābād) and patronised learning. But the flow of spiritual culture through poetic channels

thereafter went on unimpeded, though the Yādav Dynasty was overthrown and the Bahamani Kingdoms took its place. The Marāṭhi of the *Dnyaneshwari* is so finished and polished that it may be reasonably supposed to have an extensive background of Marāṭhi literature preserved in writing or even more as committed to memory and handed down orally from generation to generation. Unfortunately written works of Marāṭhi literature of a time anterior to the 12th century are not available though curiously enough works of Prākṛit literature are not so scarce. Even what we have got of the Mahanubhāvi literature has been rescued as it were, from the Mahanubhāvi *Maths* and Monasteries, where it remained concealed and was given the extra protection of the use of secret codes and conventional phraseology. To Dnyaneshwar belongs the credit of being the pioneer of the generation which asserted the right of interpreting Sanskrit learning through the vernacular i. e., the language of the people, Marāṭhi. Formerly the Pandit class wrote works of great erudition but they were abstruse and intended only for their own Pandit class. The common people were excluded from that cultural exchange. The Pandits themselves could understand the Vedas. But along with the class of priests they were adverse to bringing them into the forum of the market place, perhaps believing that with the removal of the halo of mysticism that surrounded them, the sense of sanctity would disappear and the Vedic learning would be exposed to corruption. Dnyaneshwar took the right view in the matter and off and on throughout his work, the *Dnyāneshwari* he justifies his use of the Marāṭhi for writing a commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*. The way being thus made clear his example was followed by succeeding poet saints one after another. This revolt marked the beginning of what may be called the first part of the Renaissance in Marāṭhi. In concluding this long and valuable extract let us again acknowledge our debt to the veteran author Mr. N. C. Kelkar.

and to the able English weekly of Poona, *The Mahrāṭṭā*, which frequently serves out such rich dishes to its readers

## 11. Dnyāneshwar's Predecessors And Contemporaries: The Sect of the Mahānubhāva

In this first chapter we have already used the term 'Mahānubhāva' the import of which it is essential to understand. Writing on the *Mahānubhāva Sect*, Mr T. G. Dhaneshwar, in the two Marāṭhī volumes on Dnyāneshwar published at the Nevāsa celebration of 1934, says that the Nātha Sect to which he holds Dnyāneshwar belonged had been flourishing in India for about two hundred years before the contemporaneous Mahānubhāva Sect came into existence, and that the work of extension by the Nātha Sect had gone on all over India. Mr Dhaneshwar quotes in support of his view Mr K. Y. Deshpānde's paper in the same work to the effect that the *Bhāgavata* Religion (otherwise known as the *Wārkarī* persuasion) and the Mahānubhāva Sect were both based on principles set forth in the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Smṛiti* and the *Purāṇas*. Both these sects accepted the principle of the four Hindu Āshrams or religious orders comprised in the four stages of life, viz, *brahmachārīs* or celibates, *grahasthas* or householders, *sannyāsīs* or ascetics, and *vānaprasthas* or forest dwellers. Both sects also believed in the way of salvation by *bhakti* or single-minded devotion to the Krishna *Avatār*. The one difference between them was in their philosophy, but that difference affected every detail. Most of these positions must, however, be accepted very tentatively, as scholars of other schools have affirmed that the Mahānubhāva Sect rejected the *Vedas*, the caste system, the four main Hindu religious orders, and all deities save Krishna. The whole question of the Mahānubhāvas is still under discussion and calls for a great deal of patient investigation. The late Mr V. L. Bhāve has 70 or more illuminating pages about them in the second edition of his

*Mahārāshtra Sāraswat* and to Mr Rajwade we owe the discovery of the key to their literature

## 12 The Nātha Sect

Mr T G Dhaneshwar also believes it to be indubitable that Dnyaneshwar's guru was his own brother Nivruttinath who was his senior by two or three years. Equally certain he also believes it to be that Dnyaneshwar himself belonged to the Nātha *Pañth* and that all its tenets were those of the *Bhāgavata* Religion. On the whole subject of the Nātha Sect Sardar Narayanrao Yeshwantrao Mirikar has written showing that this sect is now eight hundred years old and that Dnyaneshwar has described it in one of his *abhangs* not only so but that the names of the sect's leaders are the same as the Guru succession stated in the *Dnyaneshwari*. The chief characteristic of this sect is its humility in all relations with the Guru and the *Dnyaneshwari* is held to be its supreme book. Mr Dhaneshwar affirms the common belief to be an error which holds the Nātha Sect to be the same as the sect known as the Split Ear Sect. Molesworth in his Marathi English Dictionary (page 155) says the word (*kanphati*) is a descriptive term for an order or an individual of it of mendicants who wear heavy ear-ornaments and are worshippers of Goraknath. For full information about the Split Ear Sect, Mr Dhaneshwar recommends the seventh volume of *The Indian Antiquary* and he emphasizes the fact that the Sect of the Nāthas has carried on the succession of the *Bhagavata* Religion. On page 29 of his notable work on *Mysticism In Maharashtra* Prof R D Ranade sets forth his view that the Nāthas were a class of itinerant religious teachers who are said to have wandered not only in Maharashtra but in the adjoining Hindi speaking country and even as far off as Bengal. Stories about the Nātha Sect are definitely connected with each of these Indian Provinces and it is clear that their regular place of residence is not known. In the great works written by Dnyan

eshwar there appears ' the full-fledged fruit ' of this sect, and if the Nātha Sect produced no other disciple than the man who became the founder of Marāthī *bhakti*, the sect may be regarded as having made an enduring contribution to the religious history of India. To the facts and traditions regarding this founder of Marāthī *bhakti* let us now turn. As we do so our first discovery will be to learn that Dnyāneshwar stands at the head of a long line of singing bards who have given their people some of the finest poetry in the history of the world

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## CHAPTER II

### THE GALAXY OF MAHARĀSHTRA POETS

#### 1 An Unpublished Essay By N V Tilak

Among the unpublished papers handed over to us by the late Marāṭhi Christian poet the Rev Nārāyan Vāman Tīlak, was a lecture bearing the title 'Ancient Marāṭhi Poets'. Its value has increased every time we have looked at it. It would appear to have been delivered in Bombay City to missionaries and Indian Christian leaders. The lecture so ably characterizes the great Marāṭhi Poets that we feel it finds a fitting place in this 12th volume of the Poet Saints of Maharashtra series, particularly as it makes such a distinctive contribution on the poetry and religious message of Dnyaneshwar and on the position he occupies in the galaxy of Marāṭhi poets. These poets are so fittingly described that the essay also provides an admirable summary of the contents of the previous eleven volumes in this series. With the exception of this opening paragraph the whole of this second chapter may therefore be regarded as coming from the authoritative pen of our Marāṭhi Christian poet concerning whom Narasimha Chintāman Kelkar in his Presidential Address to the Marāṭhi Authors Conference at Baroda on November 26, 1921 declared 'Among (contemporary) Marāṭhi poets Nārāyan Vāman Tīlak worthily holds the honour of leader'. See the *Kesari* of November 29 1921.

#### 2 The Spirit of Indian Poetry

Though in India the common people believe, as probably everywhere else, that poetry is a matter of outer form, I have not come across a single Indian writer on rhetoric who has not defined poetry as something far higher and deeper than its

verbal vehicle, however elegant and pleasing that vehicle may be. 'Any expression, whether prose or rhyme, the soul of which is *Rasa*' (full of the spirit of beauty), 'is poetry,' says the *Sāhitya-darpan*. *Rasa* is that inner element in language which either creates or influences sentiment. 'A wreath of beautiful words decorating a beautiful ideal is poetry,' says the *Kāvya-daśha*. It will thus be seen that rhetoricians in India have understood poetry as a matter more of inward content than of outward form. Modern Indian thinkers have adopted the same view, and though as everywhere else, so in India, mere versifiers have never ceased to pester the world with their absurd musical harangues, India has ever been blessed with poets who have more or less influenced their destinies, guided their thoughts, and led captive their will and imagination. Philosophy gives us the 'why' of a people's beliefs, history the 'why' of their peculiar civic and economic condition, but it is their poetry and music which give us an insight into their hearts. To have ability to understand a people's poetry, is to have ability to know their hearts, to know the spirit that underlies their activities. Do you care to know the real heart of the Hindus? Then you begin to care to know what their poets have said and are saying. I myself am never satisfied with the study of a people unless I have studied to some extent their poetry and music. I am therefore glad and thankful that I am given this golden opportunity to give you a glimpse of Marāthī poetry, that you may know your fellow-countrymen in the Marāthā country better. I am glad also that I am addressing tonight a meeting of such as love Indian poetry and not a meeting of those who can find nothing in an Eastern people to admire. I once met a young would-be missionary, who had studied Marāthī for a couple of years and had heard or read a sort of Marāthī poetical composition, who passed his final judgment on Marāthī poetry by saying that it was something that depended solely on singing for its entire effect. I am one of those who recognize that all true poetry is a gift of the

Divine Spirit. Add to this the fact that I am a Marāṭhā to the core, and you can easily imagine the state of my mind when I heard that final pronouncement of a young foreigner who had not yet crossed the threshold of Indian literature. One thing more, with your permission before I begin my subject. I scarcely need remind you that we can hardly understand any poetry unless we try to be one with the poet in thought and feeling and transport ourselves to the times in which he lived and worked.

### 3 Dnyāneshwar The Oldest Marāṭhī Poet

Ancient and modern Marāṭhī poetry taken together embrace a period of over 600 years. Dnyāneshwar the writer of the famous Marāṭhī poetical commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* commonly known by the name *Dnyāneshwarī* was born in the year 1271 A. D. He is decidedly the oldest of the Marāṭhī poets though much popular belief has often given that honour to two other poets, viz., Nāmdev and Mukundarāj. Notwithstanding the dates that have been assigned to them, these two poets differ so widely in thought and diction from Dnyāneshwar that they cannot be said to belong to the period when the *Dnyāneshwarī* language was current. Their language is more modern, and I am inclined to think that they must have lived at least two centuries after Dnyāneshwar. Leaving these two poets aside, we do not know of any other poet who belonged to the thirteenth century except Dnyāneshwar himself. Dnyāneshwar wrote the *Dnyāneshwarī* the *Amṛtānubhav* and seven minor poems, all on themes connected with the Vedānta philosophy a philosophy which believes in a threefold existence, viz. the real, the illusive and the assumed, and which concludes that an impersonal, all pervading essence called Brahma is real that the rest is illusion, and that Derty itself is a mere assumption. The Vedānta philosophy also believes in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and affirms that it is rooted in such an illusion as leads each individual soul to consider itself an indivi



duality apart and distinct from Brahma or the Supreme Soul. To lose self-consciousness, by merging into the one real essence which is Brahma, is final emancipation according to this peculiar doctrine. Dnyāneshwar's style is marked by lucidity and a steady flow of language, while his simple homely illustrations are most apposite, and he possessed the ability to invest abstract notions with forms that are most charming. His Marāṭhī is archaic and that is the one and only difficulty in understanding him. This difficulty being surmounted it is very easy to understand him. Dnyāneshwar was only 22 [possibly 25] years old when he died in 1293 [possibly 1296] and I see no reason why this should not be believed, when one knows that a Bengali poetess who wrote in French and English died at the age of 22 leaving behind her a fine legacy of such poems as the *Ballads of Hind*. I trust we all know Toru Datta and her poetry.

#### 4 Mukundarāj

Next to Dnyāneshwar comes Mukundarāj, the theme of whose poetry was again the Vedānta. He wrote *Viveka-sindhu*, *Paramāmrta*, *Advaita-dnyāna-sarvaswa*, *Ashtāvakra-gītā-bhāṣya*, *Ātmabodha*, *Panchikaran*, and *Viveka-sindhurasa*. All these poems are original, and though they contain one and the same theme in the main, they bear distinctive aspects which indicate the poet's genius. Mukundarāj is rich in thought and expression, and though the lucidity of his style is much below that of Dnyāneshwar's, yet the flow of his music is so powerful that a reader is at once carried away with it and feels all absorbed in it.

#### 5 Nāmdev : 'Kutumb-Kavi'

Nāmdev, known widely as *kutumb-kavi* because all the members of his family, even his maidservant, could compose poetry, is popularly believed by many to be senior to both Dnyāneshwar and Mukundarāj, but not only is his language

modern, for the general theme of his poetry and the metre he uses for it decidedly indicate a later time. He is supposed by some to have been born a year before Dnyāneshwar in the year 1270 A. D., and for other facts see the next paragraph. No long poem by Namdev is available. All that we have from him includes several *Abhangs* (verses) composed by him on devotional subjects, a few on the Vedānta, and some on *Purānic* legends. Namdev is the first Marathi poet who denounces idolatry with real force. They says he, are fools lost to anything good who worship gods of stone. Those who say and those who believe that a god made of stone speaks to his devotee, are both stupid. With Namdev it is always plain thoughts in plain words. Namdev's poetry is one proof of the fact that there is no beauty like simplicity and he is known as the originator of that inspiring form of preaching called the *kīrtan*. A real *kīrtan* ought to be a happy combination of music, poetry, eloquence and humour all of which contribute towards driving home some religious truth. A more detailed characterization of Namdev is given in the next paragraph.

## 6 Muslim Influence And Hindu Revival

Between the year 1350 when Namdev died and the year 1548 when another great poet by name Eknath was born several poets lived and died but they do not seem to have impressed themselves on the public mind except one Vishnudas Nama, who attempted to render the *Mahabhārata* in Marathi verse. He wrote in the *Ovi* metre and only stray detached pieces from his writings are available all of which look like juvenile attempts at poetry. These four poets, viz. Dnyāneshwar, Mukundarāj, Namdev and Vishnudās Namā lived at the time when the country of the Marāṭhis was yet comparatively free from Muslim aggression. It was ruled from 1189 to 1318 A. D. by the well known Yadavs or Jadhavs, and Dnyaneshwar who lived during their rule knew nothing of Muslim aggression. It was from 1318 to 1347 that Muslims from Delhi molested

the Marāthās and finally subjected them to their dominion, and Nāmdev who died in 1350 had some experience of this political transition. Nāmdev's views often incline more towards monotheism than to pantheism, he had an utter dislike of polytheism and of idolatry; and he showed great solicitude to inculcate his views. These aspects of Nāmdev's life and work reveal the fact that like many of his followers he must have been influenced by the newly imported doctrine of the Muslims. Not so Dnyāneshwar, Mukundarāj, or even the minor poet Viṣṇudās Nāmā, who had in no way digressed from the beaten path. In a new way, with new pathos, and with the new aim of bringing knowledge nearer to the common people, they had sung the old theme and expounded it with the zest becoming real poets. From 1347 to 1526, and then from 1526 to 1664 Mahārāshtra had been under the rule of, first the Bahāmanī Dynasty of the Muslims, and then under that of its offshoots. The famous poets Eknāth, Tukārām, and Rāmdās belong to this period. They proved themselves to be a great force on the side of Hinduism when it was brought face to face with the tremendous inroads of the Muslim faith. They are considered as Hindu religious reformers by some, but in my humble opinion they were sages who had hardly any idea of reforming Hinduism on national lines, but who had loftier visions than their contemporaries, were personally true to these ideals, enjoyed them, most tenaciously held them and thus became examples and *gurus* to their co-religionists. They caused a powerful religious revival among the Hindus, and thus gave Hinduism a new impetus which preserved it from the downfall that was feared in those days. Such was their saintly influence and so great was the force of their teachings that even a number of Muslims became their followers.

## 7. Eknāth Who Saw God In Mahārs

Eknāth was born in 1548 and died in 1601. Whatever rank may be assigned to him among the Marāthī poets, at least

among the Marāṭhā saints he occupied a high place, and among the few Brahmin saints the first place. It is not true that he even saw the national evils of the caste system but like a true Vedāntist he saw the same *Ātma* everywhere and was kind to all beings. 'A man of knowledge, says the *Bhagavadgītā* 'looks with the same eye upon a Brahmin well versed in learning upon a cow upon an elephant, upon a dog upon an outcaste and Eknāth did the same. He was not afraid of worshipping Mahārs in the place of gods and *pitars* (ancestors) on one occasion and he set an example which was, however lost upon the people but he hardly even preached against caste. Of his poems his *Bhāgavata* and his *Bhāvartha Rāmāyana* are famous and worth reading. His *Rukmini Swayanivar* is much read for its devotional purpose and his *Āandalaharī* and *Hastāmālak* are charming little poems on the doctrines he believed.

## 8 Mukteshwar and Devadās

Mukteshwar was the grandson of Eknāth being the son of Eknāth's daughter. He is to be considered as a poet rather than as a saint. Mukteshwar takes all his themes from the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana*. His own *Bhārata* and *Rāmāyana* are quite popular. *Shata mukha rāvana vadha*, *Vatsala haran* and *Harishchandra-ākhyān* are his other poems. His diction is fine, while some of his descriptions of natural scenery are without a parallel in the writings of ancient Marāṭhī poets. One of the poets of this time, who is often lost sight of by writers on Marāṭhī poets, was Devadās. He has left for us a small legacy in the form of a small poem called *Vyankatesha Stotra*. I deem this little poem as the finest among all the Marāṭhī devotional poems I know. Very simple in style, full of vivid illustrations, rich in earnest expressions, breathing out the most pathetic experiences of a real devotee this poem has captivated the hearts of many Marāṭhā worshippers. The poem is most popular but the poet himself seems

to have been forgotten [This poem is translated into English on pp. 81-96 of Vol. 6 of this series, *Stotramālā*, with two pages of introduction pp 79-80 ]

## 9. Rāmdās The Guide Of Shivāji

Now we come to the era of the great Shivāji and the foundation of Marāthā power, the era that gave the Marathas a unique place in the history of India and secured for them universal esteem which lasts to this day. Tukārām, Rāmdās, Ānandatanaya, Vāman Pandit and Raghunāth Pandit were contemporaries of Shivāji. Of these, Rāmdās was Shivāji's *guru*. Himself a bachelor to the end of his life, this Brāhmin saint and poet was full of the spirit of nationalism, so much so that he was led to give a patriotic turn to the religious consciousness of his people, making it much more national than devotional. He seems to have been both the spiritual and the political guide of the Marāthās, but he was more a political enthusiast than a consecrated saint, and his poetry is more lively and full of pathos when it concerns such problems as affect the life of the Marāthās as a nation. Though he was a devotee of Rāma, there is not one single consecutive poem written by him on that deity. Of his poems the *Dāsabodh*, the *Panchasamās*, the *Junāt Purush*, the *Manāche Shloka*, the *Mānasa Pūjā*, the *Pūrva-ārambha*, the *Nirguna* and the *Saguna Dhyanā* are available. Of these the *Dāsabodh* is the most popular and consists of sermons on various practical and religious subjects written in verse. Nevertheless, as a poet, Rāmdās is much below the highest rank.

## 10. Tukārām of Dehu

The greatest saint and the greatest poet of Shivāji's time was Tukārām, born at Dehu in 1608, and still unequalled among all the Marāthī poets. He walked with his god, talked with him, took him to task, settled quarrels with him, consulted him, shared his lot with him, and nothing else was so near and

dear to him as was his Vithobā. This attitude of his mind has made his devotional flights so real that while reading his poetry one finds himself as it were in the midst of a new life, and not of mere thoughts. Excepting a few *abhāṅgs* written on the early life of Krishna, all his poetry has for its theme his own experiences in his relation to the world and to his god. Thus Tukārām himself is the hero of most of his poems, and his presence goes with a reader of them and makes them exceedingly charming. One cannot get half of Tukaram's meaning unless one has first read and studied his life thoroughly well and unless one has learned to sympathise with him in his wisdom and folly alike. The flow and force of Tukaram's music are wonderful, his diction is easy his illustrations are homely and exact. He had glimpses of the past, but he mainly dealt with the present and the future. He was an investigator and a painter of human nature and he did his work so well that none among the Marāṭhi poets merits comparison with him. I have spoken above about his close relation to his god and the turn it gave to his poetry. The Prārthanā Samājists as they sought to substitute the devotional and ethical teachings of Jesus Christ for some Indian literature of the kind, took hold of Tukārām and felt quite satisfied with their choice. I do not wonder at this, for you can find much in Tukārām's poetry that runs parallel with the teachings of Christ save its principles and spirit. These eclectics, among whom the Prārthanā Samājists are to be classified, easily read later meanings into Tukārām's words, and when they cannot do so they put them there. Tukārām's poetry is based so completely on his own experience in life that his poetry becomes a veritable picture gallery where his own life is exhibited in pictures and since the lives of Jesus and of Tukārām differ infinitely their teachings must necessarily differ. As an enquirer I made a comparative study of Jesus and Tukārām, because I too first tried to follow Jesus without being His, and I discovered that since merely ethical maxims and sentiments are not enough to make a religion, Tukārām has

nothing in common with Jesus. But he was a saint, and of those Hindu saints I have said in my *Christāyan*. 'They are far from Thee, and yet they are Thy devotees, none need doubt this; they are genuine saints, who live for Thee.' Tukārām was one of the greatest saints of India, and as such he has influenced and is still influencing the devotional trend of his people. In the case of us Christians, he is one of the most powerful of sidelights, and only a few weeks ago he threw me into the very arms of my Lord. The Christian Church has not yet produced a Tukārām, I wish it would soon produce one; for then you will see what wonders he can do in the Kingdom of God and for its growth. Of the few handy selections from Tukārām, I should recommend a book called *Mahārāshtra Veda Tukārām* [Not a few people have come to regard N. V. Tilak himself as the Tukārām of the Christian Church]

## 11. Vāman Pandit And His Defects

Two Pandits belonged to the time of Shivājī, Vāman Pandit and Raghunāth Pandit. Vāman Pandit died seven years before Shivājī who had paid his homage to Tukārām, and was greatly impressed with the latter's saintliness. But Vāman Pandit does not seem to have been in any way connected with the national leader of the Marāthās, nor does he show any concern for the social and political conditions of his people. He belonged to the class of Pandit who, outside their own homes and their own literary activities, generally keep themselves aloof from other concerns of the world. If an anecdote told of him can be relied upon, at least for its moral, Vāman Pandit had in him all the arrogance of a Pandit. It is said that he aspired to conquer, by his learning, the whole Indian world, that is to say, he longed to defeat all the Shāstrīs and Pandits in India in a discussion of subjects connected with Sanskrit literature, and to get from them a written document admitting him to be the most learned man in India. He had

succeeded in every part of India but one viz Benares the greatest seat of Hindu learning. When making his entry into Kāshī he happened to see two Brūhmin ghosts quarrelling about a vacant seat on a Pimpal the holy fig tree. One of them held that the seat in question belonged to Vaman Pandit who was going to become a ghost as a punishment for his inordinate pride, and so it must be reserved for him. Vāman Pandit heard this remark with the greatest possible alarm so he repented of his folly and at once gave up the idea of the world conquest he had desired. He even renounced his beloved Sanskrit, making up his mind to use the vernacular instead. Vāman is the first Marathi poet who introduced several Sanskrit metres in Marāṭhi especially the *śloka* metre and its many different kinds, and who taught Marāṭhas the learned Marāṭhās fortunately to enjoy *Vṛtta Vaichitrya* that is, a change of metre at every step in a poem. It is a deformity and an inconvenience for it certainly destroys the flow and with it the force of diction and yet there are many who are very fond even today of this *Vṛtta Vaichitrya*. Besides this Vāman got for himself the nickname *Yamakyā Vāman*. *Yamaka* means a repetition in the same line or stanza, of words or syllables similar in sound but different in meaning. It is a kind of rhyme with many varieties. Vaman seems to have had very good command over the Marathi language though for a long time he was accustomed to write and even speak in Sanskrit. He was never at a loss for Marathi words to express his ideas but his fondness for *Vṛtta Vaichitrya* and for rhyming has needlessly destroyed the flow and simplicity of his poems. At times he is innocently but shamelessly obscene in those of his poems which are based on events in the life of Krishna. Among Vāman's other poems are his easy literal commentary in Marāṭhi verse on the *Bhagavad-Gītā* called the *Yathārtha-dīpikā* the *Rājayoga* the *Brahma-stuti* the *Nṛgaṇīsār* the *Anubhūtilesha* the *Aparokṣhānu-bhūti* the *Śruti Kalpalata* and the *Gītārnavasudhā*.



These are all written to expound the Vedānta and other subjects related to it. He has written also his own *Sitā-swayamvar* and a small poem on *Bhīṣmapratidnyā*, which last indicates that he could have done much better if he had turned his attention more to the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana* instead of to Krishna's amorous tales.

## 12. Raghunāth Pandit And Ānandatanaya

Raghunāth Pandit is known as the writer of only one poem, based on the well-known Sanskrit poem, *Naishadh*, a poem on the story of King Nala and his consort Damayanti. To those who do not know Sanskrit poetry, Raghunāth Pandit's *Nala-damayanti-swayamvar* will give an idea of Sanskrit classic poetry. He wrote besides a small lexicon in which he has given almost all the Persian political terms then in vogue with their Sanskrit equivalents. This lexicon is entitled the *Rāja-vyavahāra kosha*. Ānandatanaya was one more poet who lived in Shivāji's time. He is a minor poet whose poetry looks like mere juvenile attempts at poesy, and we may pass him by without further notice.

## 13 Shrīdhara Who Popularized Marāthī

We now come to the poets who flourished after Shivāji during the times when the Marāthās held sway. Of these poets, Shrīdhara should be considered as the first and by far the best. My reason for giving him so high a place will be seen by and by when considering the poets who followed him. Shrīdhara was born in 1678 and died in 1728. He and the other poets, though supposed to be saintly, were not exalted by their people to the rank of real saints. But he did one thing for the people which no other saint or poet has ever done to the extent to which he did it. He had a decided aim in writing poetry. He says: 'I fully sympathize with the common people who do not understand the Sanskrit language. They are like thirsty persons standing by the side of a deep

well without either rope or vessel, not knowing that the well has no steps to go into it, and that their hands can never reach the surface of water in it. So Shridhar provided this rope and this vessel. He takes hold of the two great Indian epics, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Ramāyana* and epitomizes them into two simple attractive poems called the *Pāndava-pratāpa* and *Rāma vijaya* respectively. His other poems are *Hari vijaya Jaimini-Ashwamedha* and *Brahm-ottara khanda*. These also are epitomes of longer and elaborate *Purānas*. His *Shiva lilāmṛta* is a very popular poem among the Maratha Lingayats and other followers of the god Shiva. Shridhar excels in his power of depicting scenes of life. He is a real story teller who can make his tale quite vivid and his characters to appear as living beings, moving in the very presence of the reader. With a single touch Shridhar can make his characters live.

#### 14. Amritaraya and Mādhavamuniṣhwar

Amritarāya, who lived between the year 1698 and the year 1753 wrote fine lyrics, all on renunciation, and some jingle-like poems called *Katāvs* (or occasional poems) on various occasions in life, and some episodes of the *Bhāgavata*. These *Katāvs* are full of alliterations amusing to one's ear. Madhavamuniṣhwar wrote lyrics on devotional subjects and a few on certain occasions in the *Purānas*. his lyrics are well sounding and deserve a high place for their music.

#### 15 Mahipati The Biographer Of The Saints

Mahipati lived from 1715 to 1790 and his poems remind one of *Foxe's Book Of Martyrs*. His *Santa Lilāmṛta*, *Bhakta Vijaya*, *Bhakta Lilāmṛta*, *Santa Vijaya* are all poems on the lives of the Indian saints. He has written in addition to these a separate poem on the life of Tukaram. His poem *Kathā Sārāmṛta* is so simple that even a child

may understand it See chapter IV, Section 2, for further facts on Mahīpati.

## 16. Moropant's Poetry

Next to Shṛīdhara comes Moropant as the greatest poet of this period. But he is the poet of the learned, of those especially who seek poetry in outward form. Moropant lived from the year 1729 to the year 1794, writing in a metre called *Āṛyā*, though he has made use of other metres on a few occasions. In writing poetry his aim seems to have been to popularize the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana*. He aspired to write 108 different poems on the *Rāmāyana*, but his idea of poetry was unfortunately most whimsical. To him all that poetry meant was to make the last syllables of the first line rhyme with those of the next line. He would sacrifice anything for this sort of rhyme, a feature that makes his style most artificial, the syntax of his sentences unreasonable, and his Marāṭhī more than half Sanskrit. Here are two instances. In one of his couplets in the first example, at the end of the first line Moropant wanted to have at least the last two syllables at the end of the other line, and as he could not bring them in by using Marāṭhī words, he just put in a whole Sanskrit sentence instead. In the second case he could not manage to have the same syllables (of course with a different meaning) at the end of the other line, so he simply makes a jumble of it. This feature mars and obscures whatever good qualities may have been in his poetry. He borrows most of his themes from the two well-known epics, and shows much skill in his use of figures of speech, but there is no real poetical force or fire in his writings. Yet his *Kekāvali*, his *Saṁshaya-ratnamālā*, and his *Sītāgīta* are exceptions which are certainly worth reading.

## 17. Rām Joshī and Ananta Phandī

The last Marāṭhī poets who are counted with the ancients are the two fairly well-known minstrels, Rām Joshī and Ananta

Phandī. Both these poets at first composed love songs for *tamāshās* (i. e., for public concerts) in which a dancing boy disguised as a young woman, and sometimes actually a young woman takes the leading part. Most obscene lyrics are generally sung in *tamāshās* and those who take part in them and those who support them are alike looked down upon as well to-do vagabonds by the rank and file of the people. Rām Joshi and Ananta Phandī were, however soon reclaimed by the influence of the saintly queen Ahilyābai Holkar, and when they repented they gave up *tamāshās* and applied themselves to writing useful poetry. But they could never rise above the ordinary level of human experiences, and the most they could do was to write a few didactic lyrics. Rām Joshi was born in 1762 and died in 1812. Ananta Phandī was born in 1744 and died in 1819 a year after Maratha territory had been annexed to the British.

## 18. Devotional Themes and Purānic Legends

Simultaneously with these poets who wrote on the Hindu Vedānta on devotional themes and on *Purānic* legends, there must have lived other poets who dealt with ordinary human experiences, but who were not much thought of during their lifetime and were soon forgotten. Even today there are educated critics among us who are hard on modern Marathi poets because their poetical genius has gone outside the sanctuary of devotional subjects. A Bombay man who was writing and publishing the lives of the Marathi poets has been trying to unpress upon people the idea that as soon as a poet becomes a Christian he naturally loses all his ability to write poetry! This is much truer of the older days, and it is no wonder if poets of reality the real poets of the people, were ignored and forgotten to the great loss of the people. During the last days of the Peshwās the attitude of the people was more favourable towards poets, and the result is that today we have excellent poetry written on historical events and on

the deeds of our heroes. The bards who lived during the rise of the Maratha Power, and those of the time of their fall, have done excellent service by means of their *Powadas* or heroic lyrics, which they composed and sang to large multitudes of people. But it is true that the greatest Marathi poets were either saints, or writers on religious subject. The reasons for this we need not go far to seek. You must also have noted from what I have said that the real saints among the Marathi poets were those who lived in days when their country was overrun by foreigners.

## PART TWO BIOGRAPHICAL

### CHAPTER III

#### THE WONDERFUL DNYĀNESHVAR FILM

##### 1 An Entrancing Picture

The best way we can introduce the hero of this book to non Marāṭhī knowing readers is by a few paragraphs on the wonderful Talkie Film that has so graphically depicted Dnyāneshwar's life-struggle before thousands of people in various parts of India daily for the past eleven months at the time of writing. One of the noblest uses of the Indian film in recent years has been seen in its reviving and popularizing of the great figures in India's past. In 1937 the Tukarām film ran for 58 consecutive weeks and won the Mussolini Cup for one of the three best films at the Venice International Exhibition of Cinematographic Art. Now for nearly a whole year past crowds of people in several Indian centres have been daily flocking to see the film of an earlier saint, Dnyaneshwar of the 13th century (1271-1296) who is viewed by many as the first great singer of Marāṭhī poetry or as Śrī Nārāyaṇ Chandavarkar a few years ago described Dnyaneshwar the progenitor of Marāṭhī nationality. In seeking to discover how the first great Marāṭhī poet is regarded by his fellow countrymen today six hundred and fifty years after his life's work was completed, much help is given by the reception given to this remarkable Talkie Film prepared by the Prabhat Film Company. When we ourselves saw this film it had been attracting crowds of people for three months on end in several of the chief centres of the Marāṭhī speaking country.

Poona, Bombay and Sholapur. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the consummate ability which marks the entire picture from start to finish. The whole effect is so absorbing and entrancing that the conclusion of the performance finds one quite surprised that two hours and a half have passed away. There is an obvious lesson here for every preacher and teacher, that one of the chief secrets of success in presenting the Christian message lies in making our theme deeply interesting and attractive. We shall, below, make very liberal use of three accounts of this truly great picture. The *first* is the word for word account of everything said and done in this Talkie Film, extending to 34 Marāthi pages, composed by Mr Shivrām Wāshikar and published by the Prabhat Film Company. The *second* is by a competent writer in South India who contributed his impressions in English under the assumed name of *Priyashishya* in the *Guardian* of Madras on August 15. The *third* is a descriptive impression in the Marāthi columns of the Bombay weekly *Vividha Vritta* for August 4 under a Marāthi title meaning the 'Triumph of *Bhakti* (or Devotion) Over Yogic Power (or Over Philosophic Meditation and Asceticism)', by that able Indian observer, Mr J R Aṅgāonkar, whose literary fame has won for him the Marāthi title which means 'Ornament of the Marāthi Language'. And since Dnyāneshwar's-life story is a sealed book to many of our readers we propose to relate it here in some detail.

## 2 A South Indian Christian's Impressions

For the general setting of the Dnyāneshwar Film we cannot do better than quote the South Indian Christian writer in the Madras *Guardian* since he may reasonably be expected to be free from the partiality or prejudice that might creep into any characterization by a Western India writer. His appreciation is all the more valuable since he says he approached the film with a threefold mental protest against Hindu *bhakti* religion because of, *first*, its emotional nature, *second*,

its too frequent idolatrous character, and *third* because in Maharashtra 'Krishna prevails over Rama, a fact revolting to *Prayashishya's* ethical sense which is roused by the evil clinging to Krishna's reputation. 'Listen then says *Prayashishya* in his *Guardian* article 'to the story of Dnyaneshwar as the Prabhat Company tells us in the latest film they have released. Vitthalpant, the father of Dnyaneshwar took to *sannyās* abandoning his young wife. His *guru* an extraordinarily sensitive soul yielding to the pleadings of the wife directs Vitthal to go back to *grihasth āshram*, a householder's life. This he does in obedience to his *guru's* command. The world did not know this and regarded him as a renegade. Orthodoxy pitiless and merciless all over the world visits its wrath on the children. The leader of the opposition was one Visoba Chati characterized by ferocity and fanatical zeal. Unable to bear the suffering of his children, Vitthal pleads with the pandits so that his children may be free from social persecution. They condemned him to death and so Vitthal and his wife go and drown themselves. The father gives his son the parting command to preach the gospel of equality. He steals out in the night after placing his only earthly possession the *Gita* beside the sleeping son Dnyaneshwar. As he walks to the river his wife silently joins him in the great sacrifice. The scene is worked out with a delicacy of touch rare in the Indian films. Dnyaneshwar orphaned suddenly overnight finds himself in an inhospitable world with two brothers and a sister to support. Persecution pursues them and Visoba visits the sins of the father on the children. As is usual on such occasions God raises a champion for the orphans in the young daughter of Visoba named Narmada who loves the saint, first with the love of a child and later with the love of a woman. Returning home from Paithan to Alandi which is about thirteen miles from Poona Dnyaneshwar begins his career as a teacher. On the way home a *bandi wallah* gives the footsore travellers



a lift and as he drives the bullocks he sings the song of Krishna in a way that takes your breath away. It is a song which does not recall temples and worship, praise and adoration. The winnowing fan, the plough, the music of the rustic talk as they carry water, the joy of open life, the glory of garnering, all seem to enter and fuse into his grand song of simple devotion. For this song alone the film is worth seeing.'

### 3. Dnyāneshwar Miracles

*Priyashushya* continues 'There are miracles at every turn. The buffalo sings hymns from the Vedas as a rebuke to the pandits. . . That great *Sādhu* of the *Mutt* (Chāngdev) rides a tiger as he goes forth to challenge the upstart. Dnyāneshwar does not lag behind. He sits in a burning cottage unhurt. As the *Sādhu* on the tiger approaches, the saint rides on a wall which flies. . . Dnyāneshwar turns the brackish contents of a river into fresh and sweet water. The villagers, suffering from the drought, crowd to see and use the miracle of life-giving water. Dnyāneshwar stands wreathed in smiles as the villagers dance in sheer joy.'

### 4 The Love Story in the Film

'Dnyāneshwar was never so happy as in the company of simple villagers,' adds *Priyashushya*. 'He preached the gospel of equality and love, a doctrine which class and caste-societies always resist. He enters into *saṃādhi* (self-annihilation by getting himself buried alive) at the age of 21 and passes away from our sight. Narmadā is the element of tragedy in the story. Her love for Dnyāneshwar was impossible. It was her cross and she bears it remarkably well. Dnyāneshwar passes by the house in a great procession. In his ecstatic condition he was elevated to a higher world. But as the procession passes, Narmadā looks at him from the window of her house. The saint comes back to the world

and gives a responsive glance Great is the love of woman—is it not?—that can bring back the beloved from one heaven to another Dnyāneshwar enters the cottage for *samādhi*. They are walling up the hut. There is no coming back to life everybody is weeping Narmadā looks at him serenely The last look of Dnyāneshwar was for Narmadā This miracle of human and divine love runs through our troubled history instilling into it the sweet and bitter trends of joy in the heart of sorrow So writes *Priyashishya*

## 5 The Tyranny of Caste

The Bombay *Vividha Vritta* Marathi account of this great film may be summarized as follows Since Dnyāneshwar and his two brothers, Nivruttināth and Sopandev and his sister Muktābāi are in the picture regarded as children of a *sannyāsi* by their fellow townspeople at Ālandī, they are out-casted there although known to have been born of two Brāhmin parents. The position taken by the Ālandī Brāhmins is that since Vitthalpant their father had for a period been a *sannyāsi* all the children born subsequently must be regarded as out castes. For it meant, said the Ālandī Brāhmins, that Vitthalpant had disgraced both the Āshrams (or both stages of life) that of the *sannyāsi* which he had now given up and that of the *grihastha* (or householder) for if such a course were to be allowed they suggested that a man could be a *sannyāsi* in the day time and a lustful man at night. To all this, Vitthalpant makes the self-defence that it was none other than the *Kashi* (Benares) *guru* Ramānand who had ordered him to return to the *grihastha* (or householder) stage at Ālandī and that a *guru's* command covered such a fault. Moreover pleads Vitthalpant, even if I myself have sinned why visit my sin on my four children and refuse to recognize them as Brāhmins by denying to them the honour of the thread ceremony? To this the Ālandī Brāhmins answer that whatever children were born

to Vitthalpant were plainly sharers of his sin and guilt. To all this the Paithan Brāhmīns add later that since no such case had ever been known hitherto, the *śhāstras* (or authoritative records) have made no mention of any remedy for such a sin. At this point in the argument Dnyāneshwar holds that in view of the *śhāstric* silence, the Brāhmīns should use their discretion, to which these reply that their discretion tells them they must do nothing at all in the matter of recognizing him and his sister and brothers.

## 6. The Buffalo and the Vedas

'But you and we, and indeed all creatures, are equal in God's sight,' rejoins Dnyāneshwar in a Vedic hymn which the Brāhmīns hold he has no sort of right even to pronounce. Then the Brāhmīns hurl at him what they think an invincible challenge. 'If all creatures are indeed equal in the sight of God, can that buffalo over there pronounce the sacred Vedas?' 'Yes it can,' replies the redoubtable Dnyāneshwar in acceptance of their challenge, and after he has prayed, Dnyāneshwar at once begins to praise God in the words of the Vedas. Staggered at his persistence the Brāhmīns promptly stop his mouth in order to prevent him defiling the sacred Vedas. To their utter astonishment the buffalo itself in the picture begins to pronounce the words of the Vedic hymn usually sung at the thread ceremony of the Brāhmīns. So runs the traditional account by Mahīpati the biographer of Mahārāshtra's poet-saints.

## 7. Dnyāneshwar Becomes Popular

Leaving Ālandī for Newāsa, Dnyāneshwar there begins to expound to the people for the first time in their own Marāthī their ever precious and popular book the *Bhagavad-gītā*, hitherto known only in Sanskrit which the common people could not read. Writing down his exposition in Marāthī in the poem now famous as the *Dnyāneshwarī*,

Dnyāneshwar and his brothers and sister suddenly leap into fame and on their return to Ālandī are welcomed in a big procession by the whole town. Any ordinary man in Dnyāneshwar's place would have had his head turned by the honours heaped upon him in the very place where he had been so dishonoured but the picture shows Dnyāneshwar as in no way affected by the new and happy turn in the course of events not even when the palanquin bearing his commentary (the *Dnyaneshwari*) is placed on a raised platform so that all can see it. Amid the plaudits of the crowd and before the astonished Brahmins Dnyaneshwar explains to the assembled people in their own Marathi that real happiness in this world comes only by worshipping and praising God and by forgetting all distinctions of caste and race.

## 8 Visobā Chāti and Chāngdev the Yogi

Nevertheless as the picture goes on to show there were still bigoted people in Ālandī who regarded themselves as protectors of the Hindu religion and who still refused to recognize Dnyāneshwar. Feeling jealous of his new popularity they held that their town was being defiled. Chief among these critics is Visoba Chāti who on hearing of the procession feels stung to the quick and with five or six others begins to think out some plan for saving Ālandī from this pollution. One of them hits upon the plan of utilizing the prospective arrival of a great man called Chāngdev who is expected near by a few days later. This Changdev was a mighty yogi, i. e., one deeply versed in the Hindu system of philosophic meditation and asceticism whereby a devotee is said to be united with the Universal Spirit. Chāngdev had indeed developed such yogic powers that, according to the opinion of the time, he was considered to have won control over all the animal kingdom. It was therefore decided to inform the great yogi of the irreligious propaganda going on in Ālandī and just as the disciples of Changdev were ready to worship

their *guru*, he began to emerge above a neighbouring ant-hill by virtue of his *yogic* posture. Chāṅgdev's usual means of conveyance, it was believed, was a tiger and this was said to be waiting for him close by. So after the worship is over, Visobā Chāṭī and his friends make their humble bow to Chāṅgdev, while the great *yogī* is represented as exerting his power of knowing the hearts of others and as one who understands why these Ālandī Brāhmīns have come to him. Visobā, however, cannot refrain from telling him about the irreligious methods going on in Ālandī, and he goes on to request the *yogī* to advise the Ālandī people as one man to save their religion from such defilement. But on the other hand, many Ālandī people have become captivated by Dnyāneshwar and they drive away Chāṅgdev's disciples from Ālandī with contumely.

## 9. Dnyāneshwar's Home Protected From Fire

Amid this diversity of public opinion, Visobā Chāṭī goes and tells Dnyāneshwar that people are suffering because of his irreligious propaganda. As for Chāṅgdev's disciples they openly affirm, 'As long as the root of the evil, namely, this small Dnyāneshwar family, is allowed to remain, the great *yogī* cannot do anything for the people.' Visobā even goes so far as to say that, unless this family is burnt to death, Ālandī cannot be saved. In order therefore to end the sufferings of the Ālandī people, Dnyāneshwar decides on the destruction of his family with his own hand, and after entering the hut he sets fire to it. Says Mr Ajgāonkar at this point 'Those who try to help people by aiming at their own destruction will never remain uncared for by God. This lesson is taught by the lives of all great men who lay down their life for others, whether as scientists or saints or politicians.' At the sight of the fire, Dnyāneshwar's enemies feel elated with the thought that at last the root of trouble in their midst is to be removed, and that Ālandī will no more be defiled by so

sinfu! a family But their rejoicings are destined to be short-lived for the three brothers and their sister are seen in the picture to be kneeling in the hut and offering their prayers to God. As they pray and as the fire spreads over them all and over the copy of the *Gītā* and everything else in the hut, the flames at once are made to disappear and it is clear that nothing has been damaged let alone destroyed Then the three brothers and the sister begin to sing the praises of God who has come at their call and they celebrate the great victory of *bhakti*

### 10 The *Pāsashtī* or 65 Verses

When Changdev hears of this he begins to feel that Dnyaneshwar must be a great *yogi* like himself and so he declares his purpose of going to see him. Changdev's disciples, however declare that since Changdev is so great a *yogi* he must not demean himself by going to see Dnyaneshwar he must rather send to Dnyāneshwar an order for him to come. Then Changdev's chief disciple sits down to write whatever Changdev may dictate. The writer suggests he should begin with blessings, but Changdev does not think this right, so he starts to use a respectful form usually written to elderly people. Since that also does not seem suitable, he decides to send to Dnyāneshwar a blank sheet of paper as a letter When Dnyāneshwar receives it, he and his brothers and sister conclude that after Changdev's 1400 years of austerity and penance, Chāngdev's mind probably remains as blank as the sheet of paper he has sent but Nivrati suggests it is good the sheet is blank as any kind of interpretation could now be put upon it. In reply Dnyaneshwar sends an answer of 65 verses which go by the name of *Pāsashtī* (or the 65) When he gets this answer the great *yogi* is greatly afraid, as he cannot understand the simplest things written there, and he feels Dnyaneshwar must be showing off his learning by using big words so he decides to go to him and ask him to explain the meaning of

the letter, and in case Dnyāneshwar cannot explain it, then he must surrender to Chāngdev and become his disciple

### 11. 'Bhakti' Triumphs Over Yogic Power

Seated on a tiger, Chāngdev sets out with a big multitude of disciples to meet Dnyāneshwar. As the grand procession approaches Ālandī, Chāngdev sends one of his disciples to Dnyāneshwar to inform him of his arrival. Sopān, Dnyāneshwar's brother, notes the fact that Chāngdev is seated on a tiger, and they all feel this is being done to dazzle them by his yogic power. Dnyāneshwar observes, 'We must go forward to receive them.' Addressing the wall on which all four children are sitting, Dnyāneshwar says, 'Move on, lady!' Wonder of wonders! the wall begins to move in the picture, even to fly, in the direction of Chāngdev who is filled with amazement at this sight. He begins to feel ashamed of his own sense of self-importance. As soon as the wall has come down again, Chāngdev descends from his tiger, bows before Dnyāneshwar and places his head at Dnyāneshwar's feet. In this way Chāngdev surrenders to Dnyāneshwar and yogic power yields itself up to *bhakti*.

### 12. Appraisal By J. R. Ajgāonkar

'I am not very fond of seeing film pictures,' wrote Mr. Ajgāonkar in his beautiful Marāthī in the *Vividha Vritta*. 'The first impression one gets is that the Prabhāt Film Company must have taken immense pains in making so attractive a picture. While seeing this picture, one cannot help feeling that he is moving in the Mahārāshtra of 650 years ago.' After he has appraised the performance of the various actors, Mr. Ajgāonkar states 'It is the belief of Mahārāshtrians that Dnyāndev was an incarnation of God. All these qualities are seen to advantage, namely, fearlessness, outspokenness, a sense of being above pain and sorrow, and a supreme self-confidence. The Brāhmīns of Ālandī and of Paithan could not

bear to see Vitthalpant the *sannyāsi* having a happy family life, hence their vile persecution of Vitthalpant and his children. These scenes are portrayed so vividly that no man with any feeling at all can refrain from shedding tears at least that was my own experience. It is said that "even a heart of stone will sometimes melt, and I feel these words refer to occasions like this picture. These heartrending scenes, and the miracle of a male buffalo reciting the *Vedas*, make the first part up to the interval wonderfully attractive. After this begins the part of Shāhu Modak as the older Dnyaneshwar. Being a clever actor he at once impresses the audience. Still when one compares the young Dnyaneshwar with the older one must say that the attractiveness of the young one in Yeshwant is not quite found in the old one. The part played by the kind bullock-cart driver in taking the three brothers and the sister to his house as acted in the film by Vasant Desai is most excellent and the song he sings is extremely delightful. All the songs sung are very good but it seems to me they will not become as popular as those of the Tukaram film of three years ago. After further comments from the point of view of the language used Mr Ajgaonkar concludes by saying that the Dnyandev picture is a faithful reflection of those early times and that every Hindu should not fail to see it.

### 13 A Christian's Caveat

The Christian point of view about the Dnyāneshwar film has been well expressed by the able writer signing himself as *Priyashishya* in the *Madras Guardian* as follows — *Bhakti religion sets up deep in my soul three protests that disturb the mind with half conscious uneasiness and make me withdraw from its spiritual atmosphere as uncongenial* (1) By temperament and spiritual constitution philosophic rather than cult religion appeals to me. Were I a Hindu, still I would register the same reactions to *bhakti* cults, for my attitude is determined by temperament not by inclination. Hindu *bhakti*



movements are unreservedly *emotional*. They no doubt propound a high philosophy of knowledge but this finds expression in the realm of emotion. Emotionalism in art appeals to me but not in religion. (2) *Bhakti* is *idolatrous*. With all its revolutionary fervour, *bhakti* requires not only a mental image but also a physical idol. I had a congenital aversion, as a Hindu, to idolatry. I consider it unworthy of a great race like ours which could have as easily given the world an example in the worship of God in spirit. (3) Again, the Krishna of Mahārāshtra stirs up in me challenges on the ethical ground'

## 14 Puzzled and Pleased

Dnyāneshwar leaves *Prīyashishya* 'puzzled and pleased'. Dnyāneshwar calls all men 'equal because every man is God'. The logic repels me. I should have preferred to put it that as children of God we are all equal. His worship of the idol of Krishna when he seems to be in communion with God troubles me. Has Krishna left the world any better? It is a mad world of ecstatic saints, of *sādhus* distorted with rage, of orthodoxy shrieking in malevolence, of masses whirling to the music of "Rāmkrishna Govinda". Two criticisms may be made. If our film makers realised that the habit of making everybody God and of worshipping everybody jars on finer spiritual susceptibilities, they would use it sparingly. Why should Narmadā worship the portrait of Dnyāneshwar?

*If you want a glimpse into the psychology of the Hindu mind, then go and see Dnyāneshwar.* I am told that Sādhu Modak, who plays the role of the saint as the preacher, is a Christian boy. I can't vouch for the truth of the information. This should add to the desire of Christians to see the picture. *Prīyashishya's* impression is correct about the 'Christian boy,' but the name 'Sādhu Modak' is a misprint for Shāhu Modak. It is a tribute to the striking growth of tolerance among Hindus in recent years that the descendant of such definitely Christian

ancestors should be chosen to represent the part in the last and public half of Dnyāneshwar's life and that his part is watched with such enjoyment by the thousands who are attending the film as it is shown twice daily and sometimes thrice, in several Western India centres simultaneously. It is also a no less striking tribute to the powers of the youthful Shahu Modak that he acts the part of the great saint with such natural dignity and power. Certainly one of the most striking features of this film which many regard as the greatest film they have ever seen, is that a youth whose Christian upbringing was so widely known should have been chosen to act the part of that poet who is rightly regarded as the greatest genius in the entire history of Marathi *bhakti* literature. Many others will feel it to be a feature which affords food for thought in more than one direction, upon which we do not propose to enter here.

### 15 Features Without Documentary Support

It is with no desire to diminish in any sense the artistic triumph of the Prabhat film on Dnyaneshwar but only in the interest of historical accuracy that we refer to the features introduced by the Film Company for which there is no documentary support. In the similar talkie film on Tukaram of three years ago there was at least one important incident for which there was no authority. So in this Dnyaneshwar film there are such features. The most obvious instances affect two of the most successful of the artists, viz., the Indian lady who plays the part of Visoba Chati's daughter between whom and the young Dnyāneshwar there was obviously the affection indicated in section 4 above and the attractive character set forth in the *bandi-wallah* (or bullock-cart driver) who proved such a friend to the orphaned and persecuted children in one of their darkest crises. Neither in Mahipati nor in Namdev the two chief sources for Dnyaneshwar's traditional life, is there any basis for these two well conceived and equally well-acted characters. The interesting question arises. Are

we to infer that it is perhaps in some such way that many of the interesting stories attaching to others of the Indian *bhakti* saints have grown from age to age ? It seems not unlikely. For not a few Indian authorities themselves are quite unable to accept the miraculous element so lavishly found in Dnyāneshwar's traditional life, e. g., the buffalo-Veda story, the moving and flying wall ( which in the sources moves only and does not fly ), the tiger story, etc. We may therefore reasonably infer that the latest exercise of the artiste's imagination seen in the fascinating love-story and other additions, introduced into the life of Dnyāneshwar, may throw light on the way the miraculous element may have grown until it has come to occupy so prominent a place in the pages of Dnyāneshwar's traditional biography. On the whole subject of Dnyāneshwar's supposed miracles Mr M. D. Altekar adopts a sane and balanced view in his excellent Marāthī book on Dnyāneshwar, see sections 9 ( 1 ) and ( 4 ) in our Chapter VI.

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## CHAPTER IV

### DNYĀNESHWAR THE MAHĀRĀSHTRĀ SAINT AND POET A D 1211-1296

CALLED ALSO DNYĀNDEV AND DNYĀNOBĀ

#### 1 The Immediate Background

(1) The last decade of the thirteenth century saw the rise of Marāṭhi literature and the fall of Marāṭha independence. In 1290 Dnyāneshwar (or Dnyandev or Dnyānobā as he is often called) completed his commentary in Marāṭhi on the *Bhagavadgītā*. This commentary is usually called the *Dnyāneshwari*. In 1294 Muslim hordes under Alla u-din captured Daulatābad in the Deccan then the capital of Mahārāshtra, and forced a yearly tribute from the king Ramchandra. (2) One cannot of course assume that the Marāṭhi language first blossomed into poetry through the genius of Dnyāneshwar for many Indians have a poetic vein but no sure evidence is yet forthcoming to dispute the proud place of Dnyāneshwar and his commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* as being the first Marāṭhi author and the first Marāṭhi book. On this matter the question was asked in the illuminating Wilson Philological Lectures of 1917 by the late Professor W B Patwardhan Principal of Fergusson College, Poona 'Is it likely I venture to ask that without any background of previous literature the language could attain the capacity it evidently possesses in Mukundaraj and Dnyāndev? The instrument had presumably been worked upon by many an artist of power and skill for centuries before, had been equipped with various different chords and rendered capable of being strung in any key and to any emotional or intellectual note. The works of Mukundarāj and Dnyandev must have been preceded

by others pitched in a lower key. A sweeter if less profound literature surely had paved the way for the graver and deeper writers. Let it be frankly admitted that so far not a trace of it has been discovered' (*Purpur for College Magazine*, July 1918, p. 2). Prof. Patwardhan indeed suggests the possibility, that Mukundarāj may have been 'the predecessor of Dnyāneshwar' but there is nothing certain.

## 2 Dnyāneshwar's Biographer. Mahīpati

The lives of the Marāṭhī saints, that of Dnyāneshwar included, have been very fully written by Mahīpati, a poet of the 18th century who was born in 1715 A. D. and died in 1790 A. D. Who was this Mahīpati, concerning whose poetical accounts of the Marāṭhī saints the late Marāṭhī Christian poet Nārāyan Wāman Tilak once said that they 'remind one of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*'? And what led Mahīpati to write the 'lives' of his country's saints? For the answers to these questions we must refer the reader to our *Life and Teaching of Tukārām*, pages 67-75, where Mahīpati's work and methods are shown to be trustworthy.

## 3. Dnyāneshwar's Date

The generally accepted date of Dnyāneshwar is in the last quarter of the thirteenth century when literature revived under the Yādav dynasty, one of whose kings, Rāmchandra or Rāmdev (A. D. 1271-1309), appears at the close of the *Dnyāneshwarī* as a kind of royal patron of Dnyāneshwar. Two dates compete for Dnyāneshwar's birth, 1271 A. D. (Shake era 1193) and 1275 A. D. (Shake era 1197), as two also compete for the date of his death, 1296 A. D. (Shake era 1218) and 1293 A. D. (Shake era 1215). One date alone seems certain, that Dnyāneshwar's great poem the *Dnyāneshwarī* was composed in 1290 (Shake era 1212). The later date of Dnyāneshwar's death (1296 A. D.) is supported by Nāmdev, by Visobā Khechar who was Nāmdev's teacher and died in 1309 A. D.

(Shake era 1231) at Barsi by Chokhāmela the untouchable who had to pray *outside* the Pandharpur temple and who died in 1338 A. D. (Shake era 1260) and by Janābāi the maid servant of Namdev and one of the greatest women poet-saints of Mahārāshtra. Nāmdev is held to have been born in 1270 A. D. (Shake era 1192) to have died in 1350 A. D. (Shake era 1272) and to have been a contemporary and frequent fellow pilgrim of Dnyaneshwar. A good discussion in English of several points arising is given in R. D. Ranade's *Mysticism in Mahārāshtra*, pp. 32-184-191. If Dnyaneshwar's own testimony is to be accepted he passed away at the early age of 22. If therefore, he was born in 1271 A. D., then he must have composed his unique Marathi poem the *Dnyāneshwari* when he was nineteen years old. If, however 1275 A. D. was the year of his birth then he wrote his great work at the age of fifteen which as R. D. Ranade says does not seem humanly possible. Janābāi the servant maid of Namdev according to a reading of her *abhang* accepted by many, definitely states 1271 A. D. was the year in which Dnyaneshwar was born.

*N B* The term 'Shake Era' which appears in the foregoing paragraph is derived from a tribe named the Shakas or Scythians who gave their name to the Shake Era by which many Hindu documents are dated. This era began 78 years after the Christian as the Shakas probably conquered the Deccan in A. D. 78.

#### 4. L. R. Pāngārkar's Table of Dates

On pages 497-498 of his *History of Marāṭhi Literature* Part I, written in 1932 in Marāṭhi, Laxman Rāmchandra Pāngārkar gives the following table of dates all in the Shake Era. See M. D. Altekar's dates on his page 31 for slight variations. We give the following selection of dates from Mr Pāngārkar's table, adding the date of the Christian Era, but it must be emphasised that most of these dates are provisional

	Shake Era	A D
1. Birth of Gorā the Potter ...	1189	1267
2. Birth of Nāmdev ...	1192	1270
3. The reign of the Mahārāshtrian King Rāmdevrāo Jādhav (Yādav) ...	1193-1231	1271-1309
4. The Birth of Nivrattināth, Dnyāneshwar's eldest brother and <i>guru</i> ...	1195	1273
5. The Birth of Dnyāneshwar though some put this event four years earlier ...	1197	1275
6. The Birth of Sopāndev ..	1199	1277
7. The Birth of Muktabāī, Dnyān- eshwar's sister ...	1201	1279
8. Dnyāneshwar is said to cause a buffalo to pronounce the Vedas ...	1209	1288
9. Completion of <i>Dnyāneshwarī</i> at Newāsa ...	1212	1290
10. A book not now available entitled <i>Dnyāneshwar Vijaya</i> (or <i>Dnyān- eshwar's Triumph</i> ) said to be by Sacchidānanda Bābā, the amanu- ensis of Dnyāneshwar, but on this latter point see chapter VI, 9 (4), chapter VIII, end of section 5, also section 10, and chapter VII, 2 (5) (vi). ...	1217	1295
11. Dnyāneshwar's <i>Samādhi</i> or En- tombment Alive at Ālandī on the banks of the Indrāyanī ...	1218 Oct. 21,	1296

		Shake Era	A. D.
12.	<i>Samādhi</i> of Sopandev, Dnyāneshwar's brother at Saswad on the banks of the Karhā	1218	1296
13.	Disappearance of Muktabai	1219	1297
14.	<i>Samādhi</i> of Nivrattināth at Tryambakeshwar	1219	1297
15.	<i>Samādhi</i> of Changdev at Chāngdev on the banks of the Tāpi	1220	1298
16.	<i>Samādhi</i> of Khechar Visobā	1231	1309
17.	<i>Samādhi</i> of Chokhāmela at Pandharpur after injuries received under the boundary wall that fell at Mangalvedhā	1260	1338
18.	<i>Samādhi</i> of Jogā Paramanand at Bārsi	1260	1338
19.	<i>Samādhi</i> of Nāmdev [L. R. Pāngārkar's list here gives 1172 which must be a misprint for 1272]	1272	1350
20.	<i>Samādhi</i> of Janābāi the maid servant of Namdev	1272	1350
21.	Life and Work of Eknāth	1450-1520	1528-1598
22.	Life and Work of Tukārām	1530-1571	1608-1649
23.	Life and Work of Rāmdās	1530-1603	1608-1681



## CHAPTER V

### THE HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT DNYĀNESHVAR

#### 1. Dnyāneshwar's Life-Story

From the considerations set forth in the foregoing pages it is safe to infer that Mahīpati's account of Dnyāneshwar may have in it much historical truth, but unfortunately there is as yet available very little outside evidence to enable one to separate fact from fiction. We have therefore chosen to bring together, *first*, all the dry facts that have clear evidence in their support, and, *secondly*, a brief summary of the account given by Mahīpati where fact and fiction mingle in unknown proportions. At the close of his *Dnyāneshwarī*, his Marāthī commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*, Dnyāneshwar has a short historical note in which he says he completed this work in Shake era 1212, i. e. in 1290 A. D., in the holy place *Panchakrosh* situated on the river Godāvarī in the land of Mahārāshtra. There was reigning at this time, he informs us, King Rāmchandra of the Yādav dynasty, whom he calls 'the home of every art, and the dispenser of justice to the earth'. In this note and elsewhere he names and honours Nivrattināth as his *Guru*, and his amanuensis was Sacchidānanda Bābā. From other sources it is known that Rāmchandra of the Yādav dynasty was king at that time, with his capital at Daulatābād, and that among his ministers was Hemādripanta, a scholar and author of Sanskrit works whose name is associated with a certain style of temple in the Marāthā country, and also (though doubtfully) with the invention of the Modī or current style of handwriting. Dnyāneshwar's praise of Rāmchandra's Court

has thus received corroboration from other authorities. Unfortunately Dnyaneshwar gives no further hints as to the events of his life.

## 2 Dnyāneshwar's Works

There is no doubt about Dnyaneshwar being the author of the following Maathi works all in poetic form in the *ov* and *abhang* metre. (1) Commentary on the *Bhagavadgita* called the *Dnyaneshwari* a work highly revered through the centuries to the present time. (2) The *Amritanubhati* (a taste of nectar), a smaller work of ten chapters in which he insists that between the world as illumined and the *Atman* that illumines it there is no distinction: the world is only an illumination of the Absolute. (3) *Haripath* a small work on devotion to God under the name of Hari, and on the value of repeating his name in *abhang* metre. For an English translation see chapter VII in this book. (4) *Abhangs*. Here the burden of his song is that they are ignorant who have not realized the unity of the universe. (5) *Changdev Pasashti* a small work in *abhang* metre in which Changdev a fellow saint becomes enlightened with the knowledge that he hitherto lacked. (6) There are other poems that tradition ascribes to Dnyaneshwar but their authenticity is doubtful.

## 3 Inferences From Dnyaneshwar's Works

(1) Dnyaneshwar must have been well acquainted with Sanskrit, and well read in philosophical literature, in spite of his extreme modesty in speaking of his own knowledge and ability as a scholar and writer. (2) His works abound in illustrations, comparisons and figures of speech that show imagination a store of legendary material a love of nature and an observing mind. (3) All his works show a purpose to help men to a better and a happier life. His moral ideas are high. (4) His giving to the common people a commentary on

the *Bhagavadgītā* in their own Marāthī language, pleasant to the ear and easy for them to understand, showed a desire on his part to share with them that knowledge which for them was more or less locked up in the Sanskrit books. In Chapter IV of the *Dnyāneshwarī* from verse 213 Dnyāneshwar sings the praises of Marāthī as follows:—‘Marāthī is so dear to me as to be sweeter than nectar. Compared with the tender words of Marāthī, even the notes of music sound less sweet in comparison. All the human senses covet the sweetness of Marāthī, so that the tongue and the ears compete with one another.’ On this see L. R. Pāngārkar’s *Marāthī History of Marāthī Literature*, Part I, p. 368–370. Though Dnyāneshwar does not appear to have quarreled with the pandits of his day about their dislike of writing in the common vernacular of the people, he himself took such pride in doing his own writing in the language current among the people that in one place he says ‘Do I hear you say that these are only Marāthī words and hence inevitably lacking in beauty? Marāthī words they are, no doubt, but they will put the best Sanskrit composition to shame. They are sweeter than nectar and more refreshing than the pleasant wind. If you dispassionately read the Sanskrit *Gītā* and my Marāthī commentary on it, you cannot say which is superior.’ (5) His closing prayer (see chapter VI, 7) that God might bless his efforts to enlighten the ignorant, breathes the spirit of a true saint, a lover of God and lover of man.

#### 4. Dnyāneshwar’s Influence

There is no questioning the fact that the influence of Dnyāneshwar has been great in the religious history of Western India. Without exception, all the Marāthā saints speak of him with reverence, and acknowledge his supremacy in the galaxy of their great *gurus*. His example in expressing his thoughts in the vernacular of the people was an inspiration to others to do likewise, and Nāmdev, Eknāth, Tukārām, Rāmdās,

Mukteshwar, Mukundaram, Moropant Mahipati and a host of others have given enduring lustre to Marathi literature and brought to the hearts of the common people that which they proclaimed as moral and spiritual truths. As Dnyaneshwar lived about 650 years ago, his writings contain so many archaic forms and words that they are not easily understood by the rank and file of Marathi-speaking people to-day. But nevertheless, in both direct and indirect ways he continues to have a great share in the influences that shape the thoughts of the people in Western India.

## 5 Principal Patwardhan on The Father of Marathi Literature

In his Wilson Philological Lectures of 1917 arranged by the Syndicate of the Bombay University on The Influence of the Saints of the *Bhakti* School in the Formation and Growth of *Prākṛit* Literature, the late Professor W B Patwardhan Principal of Fergusson College Poona, said concerning Dnyāneshwar Marathi had no literature representative of the people that spoke the language, before Dnyandev came into the field. Dnyandev is thus the Father of Marathi Literature. He was the first eloquent advocate of the doctrine of *bhakti* in Marathi. He was probably the first to break away from the tradition that required all religious and higher thought to be conveyed through Sanskrit. He was the first gifted poet and man of letters to descend proudly from the isolated heights of Sanskrit and to employ the vernacular of the land for all purposes for purposes of religious and moral teaching for purposes of philosophic discussion and metaphysical reasoning for purposes of all higher life of the spirit. He was the first to espouse the cause of the vernaculars and to consider it a privilege to be able to adorn the truths of the *Bhagavadgītā* with the plain ornaments of native beauty that the vernacular could afford to lend in preference to the artificial devices of

Sanskrit. He it was who, so to say, discovered the artless grace of Marāthī and placed it side by side with cultivated Sanskrit in order that those who had eyes to see might judge for themselves as to the relative merits of the two. Marāthī was till then too modest to assert its rights. It had its merits, but they were unknown and unrecognized. Dnyāndev won for them the long-delayed recognition. Marāthī that had been left in the lurch till then, and overshadowed by the superannuated Sanskrit that was to retire before the younger beauty, for the first time grew conscious of what she was and what she could achieve. Dnyāndev was a saint and was certainly the source of the *bhakti* school' (*Fergusson College Magazine*, July 1919, pp. 32-33). Concerning the style and literary power of Dnyāneshwar, Principal Patwardhan affirmed: 'With Dnyāneshwar the *Ovī* metre trips, it gallops, it dances, it whirls, it ambles, it trots, it runs, it takes long leaps or short jumps, it halts or sweeps along, evolves a hundred and one graces of movement at the master's command. In the music of sound too it reveals a mysterious capacity of manifold evolution. The trill, the quaver, the thunder, the bellow, the murmur, the rumble, every shade of sound it wields when occasion demands. It is an instrument that he has only to touch and it responds to any key, high or low, to any note and tune.' And again 'The *Dnyāneshwarī* is from the literary side so exquisite, so beautiful, so highly poetic in its metaphors and comparisons, similes and analogical illustrations, so perspicuous or lucid in style, so rich in fantasy, so delightful in its imagery, so lofty in its flight, so sublime in tone, so melodious in word-music, so original at places in its conceits, so pure in taste ..., and above all so simple and natural in style and diction that, notwithstanding the profundity and recondite nature of the subject, and the inevitable limitations attendant upon the circumstance that the author's main object was to make the original intelligible, rather than add anything new, the reader is simply fascinated, floats rapturously on the crest of the

flow lost in the cadence of the rhythm and the sweet insinuating harmonies till all is thanksgiving and thought is not (*Fergusson College Magazine*, July 1918 pp. 7, 11)

## 6 Dnyāneshwar's Early End

The tomb of Dnyāneshwar at Ālandī near Poona is still a shrine at which thousands of Hindus assemble each year during the dark half of the month of kṛtīk (October) For the traditional story of Dnyāneshwar's *Samādhi* or being entombed alive, see section 5 in the next Chapter

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## CHAPTER VI

### DNYĀNESHVAR'S LIFE AS TRADITION KNOWS IT

#### Introductory On The Sources

(1) All references to Dnyāneshwar found in Marāṭhī literature harmonize with the account given by Mahīpati (on whom see page 18), whose *Bhalla Vijaya*, *Sarta Līlāmrit*, *Bhakta Līlāmrit*, *Kathā Sārāmrit* and *Sarta Vijaya* have immortalized the saints of Western India. Mahīpati died five hundred years after Dnyāneshwar. Legends spring up in India around her great saints, even while they are alive, so that whatever facts and whatever legends came down from tradition during these five centuries, they appear in permanent crystallized form in the accounts given by Mahīpati.

(2) An English translation of what appears in chapters 8-13 of Mahīpati's *Bhalla Vijaya* completed in 1762 or 1763 A D (Shake era 1684 or 1685), and from chapters 3-5 in Mahīpati's later *Bhakta Līlāmrit* completed in 1774 A D. (Shake era 1696), is already available in this Poet Saints series see vol. ix, *Stories Of Indian Saints* (pp 123-203) and vol. xi, *Nectar From Indian Saints* (pp 36-90), totalling over 130 pages.

(3) A *Brief Summary Of Dnyāneshwar's Life* is given below, the sources of which may be referred to as follows by all readers desiring to read the traditional life in Mahīpati's original Marāṭhī —

- 1 Dnyāneshwar's Ancestry: From the *Bhakta Vijaya*, ch VIII, 10-186.

2. Dnyāneshwar And The Contemporary Brāhmīns  
From (1) the *Bhakta Vijaya* chap I\ pp. 6-78  
(2) „ *Bhakta Līlāmṛit* ch III pp. 185-206.  
(3) „ *Bhakta Vijaya* ch IX pp. 93-200
3. Dnyāneshwar And His Contemporary Changdev  
From (1) the *Bhakta Līlāmṛit* ch. III pp. 181-184  
(2) „ *Bhakta Līlāmṛit*, ch. IV p. 11-V 193
4. Dnyāneshwar And His Contemporary Namdev  
From the *Bhakta Vijaya* ch. V p. 10-XIII 22
5. Dnyāneshwar's *Samādhi* (Entombment Alive)  
From the *Santa Līlāmṛit* ch VI pp. 53-91
6. Dnyāneshwar On His Task Of Putting The *Bhagavad gītā* Into Marathi For The People  
From *Dnyāneshwarī* ch XVIII 1707-1779
7. Dnyāneshwar's Closing Prayer  
From *Dnyāneshwarī* ch XVIII 1793-1801
8. Dnyāneshwar's Historical Note about *Dnyāneshwarī*  
From *Dnyāneshwarī* ch. XVIII 1802-10

## 1 Dnyāneshwar's Parents

Dnyāneshwar's life-story takes us back six and a half centuries to Ālandī (formerly Alankāpurī) thirteen miles from Poona. The Yādav King Ramdevrāo was reigning at Devgiri (now Daulatābād) in the Deccan, a king who was equally devoted to the Hindu gods and to the interest of his people. Dnyāneshwar's father Vitthalpant before any children had been born to him, longed for the life of a recluse but according to Hindu custom he could not follow this course without the full and willing consent of his wife Rakhumābāī. Against her giving such approval her father Sidhopant had strongly warned her but one day being caught unawares she let a word slip into which Vitthalpant unworthily read the formal permission he required to become a *sannyāsi* (or hermit) on



a basis of celibacy. How wrong was this act of his we have shown in our section entitled 'A Brāhmin Pandit on Brāhmin Duplicity' in chapter xxi. The discovery of the naked untruth which Vitthalpant told in this way at the Benāres *Āshram*, where he had obtained entrance by saying he had no wife, is disclosed in Mahīpati's detailed narrative translated in our earlier volume. For Rāmānanda, the head of Benāres *Āshram*, during his pilgrimage to the South, had passed through Ālandī and had met Vitthalpant's wife whom he at once took to Benāres and confronted Vitthalpant with his lie. Being ordered by his *guru* Rāmānand to become a 'householder' again, Vitthalpant returned with his wife to Ālandī where they were both at once ostracized as shown in the Prabhāt Film on Dnyāneshwar.

## 2. Dnyāneshwar and the Contemporary Brāhmins

Out-casted by their fellow Brāhmins in Ālandī, Vitthalpant and his long-suffering wife spent the rest of their life amid persecution, ridicule and poverty. Four children were born to them, Nivrattināth in 1273 A. D., Dnyāneshwar in 1275, then Sopāndev, and Muktabāi in 1279. It was painful enough to Vitthalpant and Rakhumābāi to find themselves ostracized by their own Brāhmin society but the greatest torture was to see their children ostracized as the legacy of Vitthalpant's act. Death being the only remedy for the particular sin Vitthalpant had committed, it would appear that Dnyāneshwar, when he was about eight years old, lost both his parents who 'sought penance and oblivion by drowning.' At this point Dnyāneshwar enters on the heroic part of his career. The elder Nivrattināth goes out with begging bowl, while the younger Sopān looks after their sister. Tradition says that on one of his journeys Nivrattināth entered a cave in the wild country around Tryambakeshwar near Nāsik to escape from a tiger and that he met there the great *yogī* Gainīnāth who initiated him into the sacred Hindu mysteries, after which Nivrattināth became

the *guru* who initiated Dnyaneshwar Muktabai and Sopan. In their lonely wanderings depicted so graphically in the Prabhāt Film the four orphaned children went to Palthan and were there met with the same cruel answer from the Brahmins that had driven Vitthalpant to his suicidal end, viz., that on no account could the children of a *sannyasi* receive the sacred thread hence the humiliating necessity to spend their lives in celibacy and devotion. On this see our chapter xxi entitled For Vitthalpant's Sin There Is No Remedy. But the young and growing Dnyaneshwar was to show of what stuff he was made in face of the Brahmin ostracism. On the question how far it is possible to accept Mahipati's accounts of the miracles performed, opinions will differ. But one such story runs. On the road in front of the learned assembly a water-carrier was leading his tired worked-out buffalo, with water-skins strapped upon its back. As the animal was not making satisfactory progress, its master was accelerating its progress by stripes from a leather last. The poor thing weary of life and work was expressing its misery by flowing tears. Dnyaneshwar's kind heart, always open to the sorrows of the world, melted with pity and he also shed tears of sympathetic grief. The assembly of Brahmins could not understand this boy who obeyed a decree of personal hardship with stoic calm, sorrowing with the pains of an old and dilapidated brute, and they asked him what he meant thereby. In answer, Dnyaneshwar asked them whether the Vedas did not say that all life was only the manifestation of the Supreme. The knowledge of the Pandits was not deep enough for this difficult task so they asked him whether the Vedas learnt by a Brahmin could be learnt by the speechless beast. Dnyaneshwar readily said yes, and he at once offered to prove it to them. With his hand on the animal's forehead, he asked it to recite the Sacred Words, and lo! there was a deep utterance of a Vedic song coming from its mouth! The savants were silenced and readily agreed that four children who could

work such a miracle need not go through the routine of a Brāhmin's life. This occurred when Dnyāneshwar was twelve years old.' Though it is difficult at this point to weave together Mahīpati's two accounts in his *Bhakta Vijaya* and his *Bhakta Līlāmṛit* it would appear that Dnyāneshwar may have received a Brāhmin certificate of purification from the Paithan Brāhmins which was accepted by the Brāhmins at Ālandī. But see our section 'Was Excommunication Removed?' at the close of our chapter viii entitled 'Some Queries'. Perhaps there is truth in both points of view and that Dnyāneshwar while being popularly accepted may have been technically under some form of excommunication ban, though his acceptance by all sections of the people in his closing days would seem to have been so complete as to argue in favour of even the Brāhmin excommunication having been removed.

### 3. Dnyāneshwar And His Contemporary Chāngdev

One of the strangest episodes in Dnyāneshwar's career concerns his attitude to Chāngdev, a great *yogī* who by his magic power is shown as trying to overcome Dnyāneshwar by approaching him on a tiger with a snake in his hand as a whip. The interpretation runs that this Chāngdev was utilized by a sworn foe of Dnyāneshwar, by name Visobā Chātī, but that both Visobā and Chāngdev had to acknowledge a humiliating defeat in the end. See our chapter on the Dnyāneshwar Film, the section on 'Visobā Chātī And Chāngdev The Yogī'. For the full account in English of Mahīpati's record about Chāngdev, the reader is referred to our volume in this series, *Nectar From Indian Saints*, chapters 2-10, pages 20-179.

### 4. Dnyāneshwar And His Contemporary Nāmdev

Professor Rānade, accepting the view that 'the required certificate of purification' had been given to Dnyāneshwar and his brothers and sister, believes this to have happened in 1287 A. D. and he continues as follows 'After obtaining the certi-

ficate of purification Dnyandev returned along with his brothers and sister and went to Newasa where by his spiritual power he saved Sacchidananda Baba from a dangerous illness. This rescue filled Sacchidananda Baba with a sense of deep gratitude and he became a very willing amanuensis for the writing of Dnyandev's great work the *Dnyāneshvarī* which was completed by Dnyandev at Newasa. A pillar is still shown at Newasa where this writing took place. In the *Dnyāneshvarī* Dnyandev imagines that Nivrattinath is sitting to hear the discourse and that he is expounding the discourse to an assembly of learned men and saints. Tradition also has it that Nivrattinath not being satisfied with the *Dnyāneshvarī* which is merely a commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* ordered Dnyandev to write an independent treatise (later known as the *Amṛitanubhav*) which Dnyandev accordingly wrote. It seems that Nivrattinath and Dnyandev along with Sopan and Muktabāi later visited Pandharpur. It was this visit to Pandharpur about 1293 A. D. (Shake 1215) which made Dnyāndev and Namdev spiritual friends and filled Dnyandev with an enthusiasm for the Pandhari *Sāmpradāya* (or *Warkaris* on whom see chapter xlv 7) of which he later became the first apostle. Dnyandev and Namdev thereupon have been reported to have wandered throughout the length and breadth of upper India. They went from Pandharpur by the Karhad road which is yet to be seen at Pandharpur and then it is said that they went to Delhi and Benares and other places. After having finished the holy places where they must have met and initiated a number of men into the line of the Saints they returned to Pandharpur probably about 1296 A. D. (Shake 1218) on the eleventh day of the bright half of the month of *Kartik*, at the time of the great festival. After having finished the ceremony at Pandharpur on the full moon day, Dnyandev manifested a desire to Namdev to go to Ālandī, for he said he wanted to pass away from this world. Namdev, along with a number of great

spiritual men, accompanied Dnyāndev and his brothers and sister from Pandharpūr to Ālandī where on the eleventh day of the dark half of Kārtik, they kept awake the whole of the night, performing devotions to God. They filled the whole air with spiritual *kīrtans*. Having spent the twelfth day of the month in that manner, Dnyāndev told Nivrattināth on the thirteenth day that he would pass away that day. We are told in an *abhang* which is attributed to Dnyāndev himself that Dnyāndev sat performing a *kīrtan* and meditating on God, and that he passed away in that state. Nivrattināth placed a slab on the *Samādhi* (tomb) of Dnyāneshwar. This incident happened before the temple of Siddheshwar in Ālandī which is to be seen even today' (R. D. Rānade, *Mysticism in Mahārāshtra* pp. 33-4).

## 5 Samādhi Of Dnyāneshwar, or His Entombment Alive

From Mahīpati's *Santa Līlāmṛit* (dated 1757 A. D.) we learn of Dnyāneshwar's *Samādhi*,\* the traditions regarding Dnyāneshwar's end. Surrounded by his brothers and sisters, by Nāmdev and other saints, on the banks of the Indrāyanī at Ālandī, Dnyāneshwar sat in contemplation and in this act he passed away at the age of 22. All mourned and said, 'Never shall we see such a jewel again.' Nāmdev was inconsolable and when he requested the god Vithobā that Dnyāneshwar might return to life so that he might see him again, the tradition says that Nāmā and Dnyāneshwar again met in loving conversation. The account of Dnyāneshwar's end, as given in the *Santa Līlāmṛit*, chapter vi, 53-91, we translate as follows.—

53 Once upon a time as the Husband of Rukminī (i. e., Vithobā) was sitting in Pandharī (or Pandharpūr), Dnyāndev arrived there and prostrated himself before Him. 54. In

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\* On this word see Appendix. Note on *Samādhi*: As Ecstasy.

the midst of His *bhaktas* He shone like the moon surrounded by the stars the Life of the World the Ornament of His *bhaktas* and the Merciful 55 Dnyāndev then said Oh God listen to the secret of my heart You know oh Vitthal that in you I enjoy the felicity of being entombed alive. 56 I desire to be entombed alive near you and I have no other wish in my heart. I do not wish for divine enjoyments and salvation at all. 57 My longing is at your feet. Aside from that I have no other longing It would be like a river which loses its name and form as it enters an ocean 58 Oh God my mind is united with your feet as salt with water or as honey with the wind 59 or as sound loses itself in the bell or as a little water mixes with the milk in the same way oh Pandurang my mind has become one with your feet. 60 As Dnyāneshwar thus spoke the Holder of the Shāraṅga Bow (i e., Krishna) who is affectionate to His *bhakta* the Ocean of Mercy and a veritable mine of kindness to the lowly thus replied 61 Vitthal said Oh Dnyāndev, the Ocean of knowledge the Life of my life my mind finds rest as I hear your words. 62 In fact, you are the overlord of the wise and the soul of all bliss I understand your longing which you have explained 63 You have composed many poems full of pathos Know for certain that my blessing is on them 64 As the Lord of Pandhārī thus replied, Dnyāndev placed his head at his feet God and His *bhakta* become one, as the visible and the invisible 65 Then the Husband of Rukminī with His own hands caressed Dnyāndev and said, 'The longing of your heart will be fulfilled 66. As Nāmā the *bhakta* of God heard this tears flowed from his eyes, and he was sorry to learn that Dnyāndev was going to enter the tomb alive 67 Dnyāndev was standing humbly before God with his hands joined palm to palm, and as the saints fixed their eyes on him they were full of concern 68 The Supreme Brahma, the Store of the bliss of self immolation (i e., profound abstraction) was before him in

its *saguna* form. In its presence the mind forgot the idea of 'I' and 'Thou' and was swallowed up in divine contemplation. 69 Then said the Husband of Rukminī, 'In Alankāvatī (i. e., Ālandī) I will give you the eternal bliss of divine contemplation (by self-immolation)' 70 The Supreme Brahma of cloud-dark complexion was Itself in truth the divine contemplation, and Dnyāndev's mind became absorbed in the form of Vitthal 71. The tenth of the bright half of *Kārtik* (November) was the most auspicious day, and the saints joyfully made the *Prasthāna* \* 72. On the eleventh day there was the watch-night festival when the Vaishnavas danced in the song-service, and on the twelfth day Dnyānrāja performed the distribution ceremony of favours. 73 On the thirteenth, Pāndurang said to him, 'You need not at all feel sorry. I will immediately come to Ālandī and give you the bliss of profound contemplation' 74 Rukminī, the Primal Mother and the Mother of the universe, brought a plate full of delicious foods and asked Dnyāndev to dine 75. Then the Lord of the world said to Dnyāndev, 'Just for once open your eyes and see, for there will be meetings between us at Pandharī without number' 76. After God and His *bhaktas* were through with their meal they sat together in joy. Then the loving *bhakta* Nāmā said 77 'As the Lord of Pandharī is going to see Ālandī, it seems to be the most fortunate of all sacred places' 78 Thereupon the cloud-dark one (i. e., Krishna) said to Dnyāndev, 'You are the only place of rest, therefore I will let you enjoy an eternal bliss of profound contemplation.' 79. As Govinda (i. e., Krishna) thus spoke, all the saints felt deeply concerned and said, 'He who is as

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\* *Prasthāna* Molesworth's *Marathi-English Dictionary* defines this word thus 'Money, rice, etc., bound up and given in charge to a neighbour on the day on which, from the auspiciousness of the juncture, it is desirable to set out on the journey we contemplate, yet on which from lateness or other circumstances the setting out is inconvenient. The departure is thus held to be commenced' 163807

eye salve to us and who has brought to us the awakening of knowledge, is being entombed alive. 80 Then Pandurang started for Ālandī with His *bhaktas*. The Husband of Rukmini the Merciful to the lowly never disappoints anyone. 81 He whose sight is wished for continuously by Indra and others. He for His love of Dnyāndev was Himself going (to Ālandī). 82. He whose form the Husband of Mridāni (i.e., Shiva) constantly meditates upon in his mind who is affectionate to His *bhaktas* and who is the Ocean of Mercy even He was on His way to Ālandī. 83 Vanamālī (i.e. Krishna) is not found by yogis who gather up their spirit into the upper region of their head. He himself was going to Dnyāndev. This was very wonderful. 84 He is not visible to Brahmadev and other gods who wish for the dust of His feet. Adhokṣhaja (i.e. Krishna) was going to give the bliss of profound contemplation to His *bhakta*. 85 He who possesses a universal form and in the pores of whose body there are countless universes, He was assuming a *saguna* form and was looking at His *bhaktas*. 86. With familiar and playful intercourse the *bhaktas* arrived at Ālandī and Vanamālī (i.e. Krishna) sat near the god Siddheshwar. 87 There was also present the Ajāna tree which is only with difficulty seen in this world. Then the Wielder of the Disc (i.e. Krishna) said to Dnyāndev in words of nectar. 88 Your fortune is great indeed. Ālandī is a holy place. I the Life of the world, will surely come here every year. 89 On the eleventh of the bright half of *Kārtik* (November) the festival will be at Pandhārī. But on the dark eleventh of that month I will come to Ālandī. 90 As Vanamālī (i.e., Krishna) thus spoke, the *bhaktas* became joyful all clapping their hands and clamorously shouting the names of Hari (i.e. God). 91 There were many bands of singers. There were also banners posted. The gods showered flowers and many Vāṣṇavas gathered together there to watch the festival of the entombment of Dnyāndev while he was alive.



## 6. Dnyāneshwar On His Task Of Putting The 'Bhagavadgītā' Into The Marāthī Language

It seems fitting as part of Dnyāneshwar's biography, that we should translate a few verses from his commentary (the *Dnyāneshwarī*) relating to his task of putting the *Bhagavadgītā* into the Marāthī language for the common people. We therefore give below a translation of several verses from the section in verses 1707-79 of chapter XVIII of the *Dnyāneshwarī* as follows —

1707 Vyās [the author of the Mahābhārata] bestowed a great blessing on the universe in giving Kṛṣṇā's words in the form of a book (i e, the *Bhagavadgītā*). 1708 And closely following the footsteps of Vyās, I have brought this same book into the Marāthī path. 1709 Where the intelligence of Vyās and others moved timidly, there even I, a lowly man, have ventured to speak. 1710 But the God of the *Gītā* is simple hearted. If He accepts the garland of flowers from Vyās, he will not say nay to my little blade of grass. 1711. To the Ocean of Milk come herds of elephants to drink. Would the Ocean drive away a mosquito? 1712 The little fledgling cannot fly, still it lives in the air where swiftly flies the eagle through heaven's vast space. 1717. Gifted men such as Vyās expound this book, so will it be out of place if we also try to expound it? 1718. Since monsters as great as mountains move about in the ocean, cannot the little fish, who sees them, swim about also? 1720 Therefore there is no ground for saying that I, a *prākṛit* (i e, an unrefined man), have done wrong in putting the *Gītā* into the language of the common people. 1723. And He whose forbearance does not weary towards the animate and the inanimate, He by whose nectar the moonlight cools the earth, 1724. by the light of Whose body the sun gains its brightness, and drives away the evils of darkness, 1726 by Whom the mind gains its force, the heavens their space, and knowledge its glorious univer-

salutary 1728. He the All Benevolent the All Powerful the True Teacher the Lord of Nivṛtti has entered *me* and moves within *me* 1729 What place is there, then for any surprise that I should take this *Gītā* that is ready to hand and give it a Marāṭhi form? .. 1735 I have therefore made this commentary on the *Gītā* in Marāṭhi in a way to make it pleasing to the common people. 1776 It would be easy to turn this terrestrial globe into solid gold or to change the seven mountains into Wishing Stones 1777 or to fill the seven oceans with nectar nor would it be difficult to make a moon out of stars 1778. nor would it be a hard task to plant a grove of Wishing Trees *but* the task of understanding the true inner meaning of the *Gītā* one should not choose. 1779 Yet I a totally dumb person, have so spoken in the Marāṭhi language that all can clearly understand

## 7 Dnyāneshwar's Closing Prayer

(1) Dnyaneshwar closes with a prayer for God's blessing on his commentary (xviii 1793-99). In the *Stotramālā A Garland of Hindu Prayers* volume 6 in this series, Dr Abbott has translated this prayer and has prefaced the following note—A translation of this prayer into English was first published in the *Dnyānodaya* of May 5 1921 Before making that translation I had taken pains to secure attested copies of that portion of the *Dnyāneshwarī* from manuscripts in the Tanjore Library I secured that portion from thirteen manuscripts, some of them extremely old. I was thus able to compare the texts of these portions with two manuscripts in the Bhāndārkar Institute, and also with many printed editions, founded on different manuscripts. Altogether I had before me practically the texts of twenty-eight manuscripts. There are many variations in the texts, though not important, yet I feel that the translation of so beautiful a prayer should be based on a text as correct as textual criticism can make it The text I now translate is the result of my

critical study of the different texts. The translation I now give to this prayer of benediction varies but little from that I gave in the *Dnyānodaya* of May 5, 1921, and I trust that in endeavouring to make it more accurate, new points of beauty have been gained.

- 1793 And now may God, the Soul of the Universe,  
Be pleased with this my offering of words  
And being pleased may He give me  
This favour in return.
- 1794 That the crookedness of evil men may cease,  
And that the love of goodness may grow in them  
May all beings experience from one another  
The friendship of the heart
- 1795 May the darkness of sin disappear,  
May the universe see the rising of the Sun of  
Righteousness.\*  
Whatever is desired, may it be received  
By every living being
- 1796 May the multitude of those who love God,  
And who shower on men all forms of blessings,  
May they constantly, on this earth,  
Come in touch with its living beings

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\* In order to forestall any possible criticism of my translation of *swadharma* as 'righteousness,' I may remark etymologically, and by usage also, *swadharma* means the duties and laws especially belonging to the different classes of men. The *swadharma* of the Brāhmin, or the *swadharma* of the *shūdra*, are the duties and laws prescribed for those castes. But Dnyāndeś included among those duties and laws those moral and ethical laws which are common for all men. Hence his use of *swadharma* has wide and noble definition, which includes the whole of every man's duties. For so wide and inclusive a meaning the word 'righteousness' is the best English equivalent.

- 1797 May this forest of walking Wish Trees,  
 May this city built of living Wish Gems,  
 May this talking sea  
 Of nectar
- 1798 May these moons without dark spots,  
 May these suns without fierce heat,  
 May all these men ever good,  
 Be the close kin of mankind.
- 1799 And now in every form of happiness  
 May there be enjoyment to the full everywhere,  
 And may the Supreme Being be worshipped  
 For ever and ever (*Dnyāneshwari* xviii  
 1793-1799 Bankatswami's edition)

(2) Among Dr Abbott's papers forwarded to us after his death on June 19 1932 we found a later English rendering of Dnyāneshwar's Benedictory Prayer with two extra verses. This must have been one of the latest pieces of work done by the gentle scholar. What better prayer could any scholar at the end of his working days offer to the God and Father of all?

1793 And now may God the Soul of the universe be pleased with this my offering of words, and being pleased may He give me this blessing. 1794 That the wicked may forsake their faults, that their love of good deeds may grow and that between all beings there may be lasting goodwill. 1795 May the darkness of sin disappear may the sun of righteousness illumine the universe and may all the desires of living beings be realized. 1796 May the multitude of those devoted to God and who rain blessings incessantly come close to men. 1797 Such saints are, as it were, wandering groves of Wishing Trees communities of living Wishing Stones, speaking Oceans of Nectar. 1798 And like the pure moonlight, like the sun when its heat has gone,

may these saints be the comfort of all. 1799. In short, may the inhabitants of the three worlds, becoming complete in happiness, worship for ever the Supreme Being. 1800. And especially may those who live by this book, be victorious in this visible world, and in the world invisible. 1801. Here the God of the universe said (to me), "This blessing will I give thee." And with this promise I, Dnyāneshwar, became happy.'

## 8. Dnyāneshwar's Historical Note On His 'Dnyāneshwarī'

Following on his closing prayer, Dnyāneshwar adds the following historical note —

1802. Thus in the *Kaliyuga*, in the land of Mahārāshtra, on the southern bank of the Godāvarī river,

1803 in the holy place *Panchakosha* (Newāsa) which has no beginning, and is the holiest in the three worlds, where the world's Controller, the Supreme Being, abides ,

1804. where the joy of the Yādav dynasty, the home of every art, the illustrious King Rāmchandra, dispenses justice to the earth ,

1805 here Dnyāndev, the disciple of Shrī Nivrattināth, born in the line from Shiva himself, rendered the *Gītā* into the language of the common people ..

1809 On and on and on for ever may this book, a treasure of blessing, bring all happiness to all creatures.

1810. In the Shaka era 1212 ( A. D 1290 ) Dnyāneshwar wrote this commentary. Sacchidānanda Bābā was his reverential amanuensis.

## 9. M. D. Altekar On The Dnyāneshwar Traditions

### (1) 'The Shakespeare Of The Marāthās'

In October 1940 Mādhavrāo Dāmodar Altekar, Professor of Marāthī Literature in Wilson College, Bombay, published a most valuable book of 320 Marāthī pages which

he called a biographical essay on Dnyāneshwar. It has twelve chapters, half of which deal with the traditional life story of Dnyāneshwar. Admiration of Dnyāneshwar himself and criticism of his traditional biographers are the outstanding features of this notable book. On the one hand it describes Dnyaneshwar as the Shakespeare of the Marāthā people. On the other hand the chief aspect of the book is the critical point of view adopted in relation to the miraculous element which is so prominent in all the traditional accounts of Dnyāneshwar. How refreshing is this Marāthi essay will be clear from the points we summarize below and we would urge Mr. Altekar to publish an English edition.

## (2) *Vitthalpant's Wrong And Suicide*

On the crucial incident of Dnyāneshwar's father Vitthalpant leaving his wife after some years of married life together Rakhumabāi his wife is set forth as so weary with Vitthalpant's pestering her for her consent to set him free to become a *sannyāsī* that one day she angrily and despairingly let a word slip which he wrested to suit his own wishes. Under thirty years of age when he thus wronged his wife Vitthalpant had never a thought of the anguish in which he was leaving her. Concerning the lie Vitthalpant told Rāmānand at the Benares Āshram to the effect that he had no wife, Mr. Altekar humorously suggests that good Hindus may wonder why the Āshram ascetic's insight into character had failed him but our Bombay Professor will be felt by many to strain a point when he says that Vitthalpant was not untruthful as it was only that he had become mad after *sannyās* or to use a milder word, that he had a consuming desire to adopt the life of renunciation. On this point, see our late Brahmin Pandit Godbole's view in our chapter XXI section 2. Mr. Altekar will carry more conviction when he emphasizes that Vitthalpant later made noble amends for his grievous wrong by obeying Rāmānand's order to return to his

wife, and by living faithful to her during their remaining twelve years, for in doing so he was incurring the ridicule and excommunication of his fellow-Brāhmīns in Ālandī who held to the unbending Hindu law that once a *sannyāsī* always a *sannyāsī*, which meant he could never return to home-life again. In thus returning to his wife at the command of the Benāres *guru*, Vitthalpant is held to have acted on the Hindu rule that a *guru*'s order must take precedence over all other rules. But it was an awful sin he had committed, said the Hindu pandits, and how terrible an experience a Brāhmīn excommunication could be six and a half centuries ago cannot possibly be understood by the people of to-day. Mr. Altekar believes that a ray of light came in the appalling experience that befell Vitthalpant and his wife: it is said that every day for six months the haunted parents with their children did penance by circumambulating the *Brahmagiri* at Tryambakeshwar, and that although they found the excommunication could not be removed, their visit to this spot led to their eldest son Nivrattināth receiving a *guru*'s favour from Gainināth of the Nāth Sect, and that this in turn led to Nivrattināth becoming the *guru* of his younger brother Dnyāneshwar. This later event, says Mr. L. R. Pāngārkar, took place when Dnyāneshwar was only eight years old. It is emphasised that Gainināth was willing to receive Nivrattināth into his Nāth order despite the excommunication ban by the Brāhmīns, and Mr. Altekar reasons in favour of Gainināth having done this at the request of the out-casted father himself. With the position of their two eldest sons thus secure, the two distracted parents felt they could now safely carry out the order of the Ālandī Brāhmīns, viz., that the only way out of their sin was death itself, and so Vitthalpant and the faithful Rakhumābāi journeyed to Prayāg, the famous pilgrim spot now called Allāhābād, and together flung themselves into the water where the Ganges and the Jumnā meet.

### (3) *Vain Search For Brāhmin Recognition*

Tragic as was the loss of both their parents, the four orphans (the eldest of whom was under eleven and Dnyāneshwar under nine) were saved from hate or bitterness by their previous reception into the Nāth Sect which fact also emboldened them to resolve on appealing against the Ālandī excommunication to the Brāhmin authorities two hundred miles away at Paithan regarded in those days as the chief centre of Deccan Hinduism. The long journey to Paithan is one of the most moving scenes in the Prabhat Film and their many sorrows at so early an age probably had much to do with their early maturity. Mr L. R. Pāngārkar in his fine Marāṭhi *Life of Dnyāneshwar* believes that Nivrattināth cared nothing at all for any recognition by the Brahmins of the day but that Dnyāneshwar emphasized the great importance of such recognition. Mr Altekar has doubts about this. However that be, it would seem the four children endured indescribable sufferings in order to obtain the coveted Brahmin recognition. If Mr Altekar's reasoning is to be accepted, the Brāhmins never recognized Dnyāneshwar and the three others as Brāhmins to the day of their death. He tenaciously insists that while the Paithan Brāhmins bowed in respect to Dnyāneshwar out of regard for his reported miracles, they neither gave the letter of recognition that was requested of them nor would they perform the thread ceremony on the four orphaned children, on the ground that no Hindu law could permit any *sannyāsi* to have children. Your thread ceremony is an impossibility which means that by caste you are not Brāhmins and if not Brahmins no marriage either! A Sanskrit poem has been found which professes to state that these four children were given a sort of recognition by the Paithan Brāhmins but Mr Pāngārkar says there is a difference of opinion about its value and Mr Altekar believes it may have been written two or three centuries later. He also suggests



that the appeal to Paithan took place some twelve years after entrance into the Nāth Sect.

#### (4) *Criticism And Admiration*

Mr. Altekar raises many queries. As for the buffalo uttering a sentence of the Vedas, he has no faith in the story, for Dnyāneshwar's real miracle is in the astonishing poetry he wrote. Nor does he approve of the alternative theory that the word 'buffalo' (*rede*) has been mistakenly read into the story, whereas (so runs the theory) the Vedic words were uttered by some *man* present who happened to be named 'Rede'. Whether the *Dnyāneshwarī* was written at Newāsa, or at Āpegāon, or somewhere else, is not certain as the evidence is inadequate to decide the matter. Equally uncertain and indecisive does Mr. Altekar regard the tradition that Dnyāneshwar composed his unique poem so young as is stated. He also holds the reference to Sacchidānanda Bābā in the closing verses of the *Dnyāneshwarī* to have been inserted later, and if these verses are not from Dnyāneshwar's pen, so also the statement must be rejected that Dnyāneshwar had raised from death to life this same Sacchidānanda. Similarly Mr. Altekar has no faith in the traditional account of Dnyāneshwar's *saṁādhi*, or his being buried alive. This is dated by Mr. Pāngārkar on October 21, 1296 A. D. and is said to have taken place when Dnyāneshwar was a month or two over 21 years of age, the chief witness being Nāmdev concerning whose account Mr. Altekar has grave doubts of its trustworthiness. It is also worthy of note that Mr. Altekar believes more evidence is required before the various dates set forth in L. R. Pāngārkar's list of dates (see page 50) can be accepted. He has similar doubts about Nāmdev's evidence. But despite Mr. Altekar's critical attitude on several crucial aspects of Dnyāneshwar's biography, he takes a position which is second to none in admiration of Dnyāneshwar's life and work.

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## CHAPTER VII

### SOURCES FOR THE LIFE OF DNYĀNESHWAR

#### 1 The Sources Behind Mahīpati

(1) Behind Mahīpati's account of Dnyāneshwar there would appear to be ultimately one *main* source for all the biographies of Dnyāneshwar. That source is Dnyāneshwar's contemporary Namdev who has given the life of Dnyāneshwar in thirty verses entitled *Dnyāndevāchi Ādi* (Dnyāndev's Origin). Mahīpati himself says he has taken from this Namdev source his own account of Dnyāneshwar which he gives in Chapter VIII verses 10-186 of his *Bhakta Vijaya*. This will be found translated into English in volume ix of this series *Stories Of Indian Saints* and briefly summarized in the present book, chapter vi, section 1 on Dnyāneshwar's Parents.

(2) On the other hand Laxmanrao Ramchandra Pangarkar in his *History of Marathi Literature* Part I written in 1932 in Marāṭhi points out on page 499 in a section dealing with 'Two Old Lives Of Dnyāneshwar' that, although there have been several lives of Dnyāneshwar both in poetry and in prose the two most ancient and authoritative are the one by Nāmdev and another by Satya Malnath. The life by Namdev is in the *abhang* metre and Malnath's is in the *ovi* metre. The life by Namdev is in three parts the first being named *Ādi* (Origin) the second *Samādhi* (End) the third *Tirthāvali* (Pilgrimage). The *Ādi* (Origin) has 30 (or 29) *abhangs* and contains the account of Dnyāneshwar's parents the *Samādhi* (End) has 266 *abhangs* and gives the account of the death of Dnyāneshwar's sister and three brothers and



have been a contemporary of Dnyaneshwar and therefore his life of Dnyaneshwar has more importance than that of any other writer. Nearly all authors of Dnyaneshwar's life Mahipati included have taken Namdev's life of Dnyandev as their basis. Namdev and Dnyandev had gone together to visit all the sacred places of all India and because these two saints lived in each other's company for a long time, this writing of Namdev is naturally considered as the only final authority for our knowledge of Dnyandev. On the whole the verses of Namdev which give the lineage of Dnyaneshwar are more or less elliptical and unless one knows previously the main facts about the history of Dnyandev it is not easy to understand Namdev's verses. From the mere names mentioned, it becomes difficult to understand their relations. The verses give not a single date of any person mentioned, so that many things are left to be inferred.

## (2) *The Facts Supplied By Namdev's Abhangs*

The gist of these famous 26 verses by Namdev is as follows —There was a person by name of Govind, and Nirābāi was his wife, both being the disciples of Gahmīnath of the Split Ear Nāth Sect. But where they lived and how they lived and also to which particular branch of Brahmans they belonged, and what were their ages, none of these facts can be inferred. After nine months Nirābāi gave birth to a son who was given the name Vitthal and who on being invested with the sacred thread studied the Vedas grammar and the *śāstras* and became a good speaker. After completing his religious and secular studies he had a great desire to visit the sacred places of India and with the permission of his parents he set off. In the course of his wanderings he happened to come to Alankāpur (modern Ālandī) on the banks of the Indrayani river. There Sidhopant, an inhabitant of Ālandī met him and took him to his house. Now Sidhopant's calling was that of Kulkarni of Ālandī and he had a dream enjoining him to

give his daughter in marriage to his guest named Vitthal. For his part, Vitthal wanted a corroborating command of God in corroboration of Sidhopant's dream. When he came telling him he would have four children (as *avatar* of god,) the marriage took place. The bride's name was later known as Rākhumāi after she had come to live with her husband at Ālandī at the request of Sidhopant. After marriage Vitthal went to Pandharpūr with his father-in-law and on his return he went on a pilgrimage to Rāmeshwar. After returning from Rāmeshwar, Vitthal wished to see his parents and he took with him his wife and father-in-law. After this event Sidhopant left his daughter and son-in-law and returned alone (to Ālandī), and Vitthal's old parents died soon after. Temperamentally he was indifferent to family affairs and always melancholy, and as Sidhopant knew this fact he brought Vitthal to Ālandī. Vitthal seems to have been weary of his sedentary life at Ālandī and he had no child. Being temperamentallyaverse to all worldly concerns he wished to go to Wārāṇasī (modern Benāres) and there enter the fourth stage of life as a *sannyāsi*, a step which was in contradiction to his divine dream before marriage. Moreover, to become a *sannyāsi*, it was a strict religious rule that his wife's consent was essential. He therefore tried again and again to elicit her consent, but as she had been secretly warned by her father not to agree until they had a child, a male issue especially, she was constantly on her guard and would not give her approval. But being in an uneasy frame of mind one day the consent slipped out of her mouth quite casually, and snatching at this opportunity, Vitthal left his home and became a *sannyāsi*. That this change took place at Wārāṇasī (Benāres) is to be inferred from the report of the head of the *sannyāsīs*, Rāmānand, concerning what happened when he halted at Ālandī on his way to Rāmeshwar. When he came to know at Ālandī about Rākhumāi, he abandoned his journey to Rāmeshwar and went back to Benāres, taking with him both

Rakhamāi and her father. There the head *sannyasi* advised Vitthal to return to his former life as a householder. Vitthal had come to be called Chaitanya in this fourth stage, and when he again became a householder the people laughed at him, the Brahmins excommunicated him and his relatives abandoned him. In this situation twelve years passed during which he had four children Nivrutti, Dnyaneshwar, Sopan and Mukta bāi. All the people scoffed at the names of his children, and when his sons became of age to be invested with the sacred thread Vitthal approached the Brahmins and requested them to pardon him for all his faults, to purify him and to receive him back into their caste. Consulting the *shastras* the Brahmins came to the conclusion that there was no penance for Vitthal except that of destroying himself. This he agreed to do and having bowed to the Brahmins he set off leaving his wife and children. Nivrutti then requested the Brahmins to consider the case of the four children, and in reply the Brahmins told him to go to Pratishtan (modern Pathan) and to bring a letter of authority from them so they promised they would act accordingly.

### (3) *Comments On Namdev's Information And Its Omissions*

(1) No mention is made of the place where Vitthal lived after his return from Benares. It would appear that from this point Sidhopant had no connection with him for no mention is made of him. Indeed, had he been connected with him he also would have been excommunicated along with his son-in-law. Nor does Sidhopant appeal to the Brahmins on behalf of his son-in-law. So where he was and why he became indifferent cannot be guessed. In fact he ought to have taken a leading part in requesting the Brahmins to allow his only daughter his son-in-law and his grandchildren to return into their caste, but he does not seem to have done this. He could have brought from Benāres from the head of the *sannyāsis* a

certificate which would have been respected not only in Paithan but all over India. Similarly if, instead of going to the junction of the three rivers (the Ganges, the Jumnā, and the Saraswatī) at Prayāg (modern Allāhābād) to immolate himself, Vitthal had gone to Benāres and had taken a certificate from the head of the *sannyāsīs* who had sanctioned his return to his former life as a householder, it would have silenced the Brāhmins of Paithan and the whole trouble would have been settled. But it was cruel of him to abandon his wife and children and thus make them ridiculous, especially as he had a divine command for his marriage with Rakhumābāi and a divine promise that he would have four children as *avatārs* of gods. There can be no doubt that the head of the *sannyāsīs* would have helped him at so critical a moment, as Vitthal's return to the former stage of life had been at his command, and the responsibility therefore lay on his shoulders. In verse 905 the first line reads:— '*Deumyā patra mghāle satwar*'. This ought to be '*Gheumyā*,' i. e., they 'took the letter' of the Brāhmins of the place from which they started and delivered it to the Brāhmins of Paithan, who read the letter but decided there was no remedy left for the children. In verse 901 Vitthal is said to have abandoned his wife and children, but after this no mention is made of the wife or the mother of the children. [See however, the next chapter (VIII), section 8, where, as also in the Prabhāt Film, the wife is depicted as accompanying her husband in his death-plunge into the dark waters]. Then followed the reported miracle of the buffalo reciting the Rīg Veda, and the Brāhmins of Paithan became convinced of the spiritual power of the children.

(11) In verse 907 the children are said to have stayed in Paithan. There they devoted their time in reading philosophical works such as the *Bhagavadgītā*, etc., they bathed in the Bhogāwatī (Godāvarī) river, and visited Kalikā. Who this Kalikā is cannot be guessed. Paithan is not known for such a deity.

(iii) Another miracle, that of the reported bringing back the deceased ancestors of a person in visible form at the anniversary of their death is mentioned in this verse. What the particular reason was for this miracle is not mentioned. And whether the children were connected with the gentleman of the house is also not mentioned. Namdev does not say who this person was, nor what it was that led Dnyāndev to bring back the dead ancestors in their original forms. The children then departed from Paithan and went to Newasa, and on leaving there they took the buffalo with them which died on their way to Ālandī, their native place, and was buried in the forest of Ale. At Newasa it was that Dnyāndev wrote his *Dnyāneshwarī*.

(4) *Inferences From Namdev's Ādi (Lineage) Of Dnyāneshwar*

From Namdev's *Ādi (Lineage)* of Dnyāneshwar the following inferences may safely be deduced —

(i) Nāmdēv does not give the name of the place where Govind and his wife Nirabāi lived. This is known from verse 889 from the conversation between Sidhopant and Vitthal.

(ii) Vitthal left his home to visit sacred places all over India after the completion of his religious and secular studies. This means he was quite of an age to take care of himself in his wanderings, and at the time of marriage he must have been between 20 and 25. Rakhumabai's age at the time of her marriage is not known, but it could be inferred that she was of an age to suit that of her husband.

(iii) Marriages did sometimes take place without the consent of parents as in the case of Vitthal. In verse 889 it is said that the horoscopes of the bride and the bridegroom proved satisfactory in thirty six points as astrological science requires.



(iv) Before marriage Vitthal had visited all the sacred places of North India, and after marriage he went to visit the sacred places of South India including Rāmeshwar. Nāmdev gives the names of the important sacred places of North and South India which Vitthal visited. After returning from Rāmeshwar he wished to see his parents after a long separation from them.

(v) Sidhopant accompanied Vitthal (to Āpegāon) and his wife, and there left his daughter and son-in-law and returned to Ālandī

(vi) Vitthal's parents died soon after, and when Sidhopant heard of his son-in-law's indifference to family affairs and his melancholy temperament he went to Āpegāon and brought his daughter and son-in-law to Ālandī to stay there.

(5) *Problems Left Unsolved By Nāmdev's 'Ādi' (Lineage) of Dnyāneshwar*

In addition to points already mentioned in the foregoing the following difficulties remain —

(1) It seems marriages took place in those days at an adult age and that the consent of parents was not always necessary, for Vitthal settled the marriage himself when he was far away from his parents. Whether he carried his horoscope with him, and whether it was customary to do so, are questions to be considered. It seems probable that Vitthal had his horoscope near at hand, otherwise how could the horoscopes of the bride and the bridegroom be said to agree in the needed thirty-six points?

(2) The life of the three brothers and their sister after their return to their native place at Ālandī is not known. Whether it was happy or unhappy cannot be conjectured. But from the treatment they received at the hands of Visobā Chātī it would appear that they could not be happy. Only the name

of one persecutor is mentioned and this not by Nāmdev but he seems to have been a most powerful persecutor since no one seems to have come forward either stealthily or openly to help these persecuted brothers and their sister. At least no mention is made to that effect.

(iii) In verse 897 Nāmdev refers to the chief of the *sannyāsīs* as Shripād or Swāmī which only means a *sannyāsī* and is not the proper name of the chief. For by the same name he has spoken of Vitthal (or Chaitanya as he was called in the fourth stage). Vitthal was no longer a *sannyāsī* then why should he be referred to as a *Shripād* or a *sannyāsī*? He was now a *grhastha* (householder).

(iv) Nāmdev nowhere mentions the name of Visobā Chātū (afterwards called Visobā Khechar) in his *Ādi*.

(v) In verse 909 nothing beyond the supplication of Chāngdev is mentioned. Nāmdev neither mentions the miracle of the moving of the wall nor the cause that led to the supplication of Chāngdev.

(vi) In verse 908 the Marathi version of the *Bhagavadgītā* by Dnyāneshwar is mentioned as having been made in Newāse; but there is no mention of the name of the writer (Sacchidānand Bābā) or the miracle relating to him as given by other writers. Nor does Nāmdev describe the miracle of the mosque.

(vii) Nāmdev says nothing about the social life of the three brothers, nor to which particular caste they were supposed to belong nor whether men of other castes interlined with them.

### 3 Nāmdev's Tirthāvalī (Abhangs On His Wanderings) (Prepared by the late Pandit N. R. Godbole)

Nāmdev has devoted 58 other *abhangs* numbered 913-970 to the description of his wanderings with

Dnyāneshwar to the sacred places of India. It was in fact Dnyāneshwar who urged the god Vithobā to consign Nāmdev to his care as they visited the sacred places together. Nāmdev does not mention the name of any other saint as accompanying them on their wanderings. Nor does he refer to the reported miracle of restoring a dead cow to life at Hastināpūr (or modern Delhī). The only miracle mentioned is that of the well on their way which swelled with water to quench the thirst of Nāmdev, but the location of the well is not stated. Nor is their meeting with Kabīr at Benāres referred to. The names of Nivrīti, Dnyāneshwar, Sopān, Khechar and Naraharī the goldsmith are given in verse 933 as they went to receive Nāmdev on his return from his wanderings to sacred places. Why the name of Dnyāneshwar is included among those who welcomed Nāmdev back is not known, for since he was a constant companion of Nāmdev in his wanderings he deserved *reception* along with Nāmdev. He had no reason to go to receive Nāmdev. In verse 936 the names of Nivrīti, Dnyāneshwar, Janamitra, Sopān, Sāvātā, Jalhan, Chokhāmēlā and Vankā are given, as having accompanied God and Nāmdev in conveying invitations to Brāhmins to the feast given at the completion of Nāmdev's wanderings. In verse 964, the names of Nivrīti, Dnyāneshwar, Sopān, Sāvātā, Janamitra, Asand, Sudāmā, Visobā, Khechar, Naraharī the goldsmith, Chokhāmēlā, Vankā and Gorā the potter are noted as saints who inter-dined with God and with Nāmdev. In verse 966 the names of the same saints are detailed as in verse 964 with the addition of Sujān whom God glorified. To the foregoing verses are added three more numbered 971-973 in glorification of Dnyāneshwar at *Kāshī* or modern Benāres.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOME QUERIES ON L. R. PĀNGĀRKAR'S MARĀTHĪ LIFE OF DNYĀNESHVAR

*This section was prepared by the late  
Pandit N. R. Godbole*

#### 1 The Yādav Kings

Among the lives of Dnyaneshwar in modern times that written by Mr. Pangarkar is supposed to be one of the best. From many points it is so. In the first chapter he describes the country of Maharashtra in the time of Dnyaneshwar as it was then ruled by a Kshatriya race called the Yādavs. In this line there were kings like Jastrapala, Singhandev and Rāmdev who were very good rulers and encouraged learning and the arts. There lived in those days learned men like Bhaskara chārya and Bopdev, politicians like Hemadpant, and saints like Dnyaneshwar and Namdev. Devgiri (modern Daulatabad), Paithan, Āpegaon, Newasa, Ālandi and Pandharpur places which are connected with the life of Dnyaneshwar were under the rule of the Yādavs. Mr. Pangarkar has given the names of nine of the Yādav kings beginning with Bhīllam (Shaka era 1109-1113 i. e., 1187-1191 A. D.) and ending with Harapāl who was killed in Shaka 1240 i. e. in 1318 A. D. Ramchandra in whose time Dnyaneshwar wrote his *Dnyāneshvarī* was the seventh in the line (Shaka 1193-1231 i. e. 1271-1309 A. D.).

#### 2 Dnyāneshwar's Ancestors in Royal Service

Some of the ancestors of Dnyāneshwar were in the service of these Yādavs and the Bhāgavata cult of Pandharpur flourish

ed in the reign of King Rāmdev, for he was its sympathizer and encourager. Dnyāneshwar at the end of his *Dnyāneshwarī* speaks very highly of Rāmdev, and in the time of the Yādavs books on medicine, astronomy and religion were written by learned men. In the time of Rāmchandra's great grandfather, King Singhan, and the third in the line (Shake 1132-1169, 1 e, 1210-1247 A. D.), lived Tryambakpant, the great grandfather of Dnyāneshwar, while Dnyāneshwar himself lived later in the time of Rāmchandra or Rāmdevrāo. This Tryambakpant was in the royal service and was appointed as the sole officer of the country of Bīd where he served for five years. He had two sons, Govindpant and Haripant, the former of whom lived at Āpegāon, eight miles from Paithan on the bank of the Godāvārī river, where the ancestors of Dnyāndev were *Kulkarnīs* or revenue collectors, and the latter, Haripant, died as a soldier on the battlefield in the service of King Singhan in Shake 1135, 1 e, 1213 A. D. On his death Tryambakpant felt very melancholy and went to live in Āpegāon, there to spend his remaining days in the service of the god.

### 3. Dnyāneshwar's Ancestors The Disciples Of Gorakshanāth

In his wanderings Gorakshanāth happened to go into Āpegāon and Tryambakpant became his disciple. The latter lived in Shake 1129, 1 e, 1207 A. D. but the date of his death is not known, though his tomb is at Āpegāon. Tryambakpant's older son Govindpant was married to Nirābāī the sister of Krishnājipant Devkule of Paithan, and to them a son was born when Govindpant was 55. This son was named Vitthal, and he became the father of Dnyāneshwar. Govindpant and his wife Nirābāī were the disciples of Gahinīnāth, the disciple of Gorakshanāth, and at the age of seven the investiture of the sacred thread ceremony of Vitthal took place. He studied the Vedas, poetry and grammar at the house of his maternal uncle

Krishnājipant Devkule of Paithan After that he went to visit the sacred places of India with the consent of his parents

#### 4 Vitthal's Lie

After marriage Vitthal went to Pandharpur with his father in law but from there he went immediately to Rameshwar and after visiting the sacred places of South India he returned to Ālandī Thence he went to Āpegnon with his wife and father in law to see his old parents after a long separation Some time later his parents died Vitthal was by nature indifferent to worldly affairs and when his wife wrote to her father to that effect the latter went to Āpegnon and took both of them to Ālandī Even after coming to Ālandī Vitthal felt restless, for he wanted to go to Kashi (i. e., Benares) and there enter the fourth stage of life, that of a *sannyasi*. Tutored by her father Vitthal's wife was ever on the alert not to give him permission to go Kashi (Benares) until they had a male child, which is regarded as a religious requirement before a man can become a *sannyasi*. But one day the wife was in an uneasy mood and some words dropped from her lips as it were unconsciously and Vitthal construed them as consent. He therefore absconded and went directly to Benares where he became a *sannyāsi* as the disciple of Ramānand. He told a lie, for he told Ramānand that he was without any worldly tie such as wife or child. The rumour of his becoming a *sannyāsi* reached his wife at Ālandī and on receiving this news she determined to spend her life in doing penance. Just at this time Ramānand with more than fifty of his disciples was on his way to Rameshwar and he halted at Ālandī. In the evening as usual Rakhmābāi the wife of Vitthal, was visiting Māruti. Seeing Ramānand and thinking him to be a great saint she bowed down to him, and in return Ramānand gave her the blessing that she would be endowed with sons. At this she laughed, and Ramānand enquired the cause of her laughter. After she had explained, Ramānand guessed that she was the

wife of his new disciple Chaitanya, which was now Vitthal's name in the fourth stage. The *swāmī* was startled at heart and he asked her had she any relatives in the town. As she answered in the affirmative he went to see her father who worshipped him and urged him to stay for dinner. The *swāmī* then postponed his journey to Rāmeshwar and returned to Benāres, taking Rakhumābāi and her father to give the former back to her husband. On returning to Benāres the *swāmī* summoned Chaitanya (Vitthal's new name) and commanded him to speak the truth. Chaitanya (Vitthal) then told the truth and the *swāmī* at once commanded him to enter again the *grihastha* stage (i.e., of a householder) and to go back to his country.

## 5. Dnyāneshwar's Birth-Date

Sidhopant returned to Ālandī with his daughter and son-in-law (Vitthal), and exactly where Vitthalpant settled after his return from Benāres is not certain. Mr Pāngārkar says that three sons and one daughter were born to him at Āpegāon, and he does not say that Vitthalpant went to Āpegāon after his return to Ālandī with his father-in-law from Benāres. He says that they were born at Āpegāon. The birth-dates of the children are (1) Nivrattināth in *Shake* 1195 the morning of the 1st dark fortnight of *Māgh* (February-March) i.e., in 1273 A. D. (2) Dnyāneshwar in *Shake* 1197, at midnight of the eighth of the dark fortnight of *Shrāvan*, i.e., in 1275 A. D. (3) Sopāndev in *Shake* 1199 on the full moon day of *Kārtik* (November) when the night had advanced two and a half hours, i.e., in 1277 A. D. (4) Muktābāi, a girl, in *Shake* 1201 at noon on the bright first of *Āshvin* (October), i.e., in 1279 A. D. Some give these dates differently, viz., (1) *Shake* 1190, i.e., 1268 A. D., (2) *Shake* 1193, i.e., in 1271 A. D., (3) *Shake* 1196, i.e., in 1274 A. D., and (4) *Shake* 1199, i.e., in 1277 A. D. Udbodhnāth clearly states that Dnyāneshwar was born at Āpegāon and was buried at Ālandī. In corroboration of his dates Mr Pāngārkar has given

the verses of Janabāi, Namdev\* Visobā Khechar and Sacchidanand Bābā. Of these Janabāi gives the birth dates of all the children while the remaining three give only that of Dnyāneshwar. On pp. 46 and 92 of his book Mr. Pangarkar refers to Sacchidanand Bābā as the author of *Dnyāneshwar Vijaya* (Dnyāneshwar's Triumph) and on pp. 35 and 133 he gives the name of Niranjan Mādhav as its author. Niranjan Mādhav is known to be the only author of the *Dnyāneshwar Vijaya* and no one knows of any *Dnyāneshwar Vijaya* by Sacchidanand Bābā. [See further section 10 in this chapter also chapter vi 9 (4) and chapter vii 2 (5) (vi)]

## 6 Dnyāneshwar's Guru Line ( Guru Sāmpradāya )

Tryambakpant the great grandfather of Dnyaneshwar was the disciple of Gorakshanath the third in the *guru* line of the Split-Ear Sect viz., (1) Ādināth (2) Matsyendranāth, (3) Gorakshanāth. Of Gairināth or Gairināth the fourth in the *guru*-line, Tryambak's son Govindpant and his wife were disciples. Vitthalpant Dnyandev's father was the disciple of Ramānand of Benāres, while Vitthal's eldest son Nivrutti was the disciple of Gairināth the fourth in the *guru*-line, and Nivruttināth became the *guru* of his two brothers Dnyandev and Sopan and of his sister Muktabāi. Vinayak Lakshman Bhāve in his *Mahārāshtra Sārasvat* chapter five, page 114 quotes Dnyāneshwar as giving the *guru* succession of his family as follows: Ādināth, Machchhindranāth Gorakshanath, Gairināth, Nivruttināth then Dnyānanath (or Dnyaneshwar).

## 7 Nivruttināth Protected From A Tiger

Being quite hopeless regarding the investiture by the sacred thread of his eldest son Nivrutti Vitthalpant determined

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Nāndev says Dnyāneshwar the perfect Brāhmin became an *avatar* at Alankāpurī which means that Dnyāneshwar was born at Ālandī, and not Āpogāon as Udbodhnath states.



to perform a penance and so he went to Tryambakeshwar with the consent of his wife, taking both her and the children. He bathed at Kushāvart at midnight and circumambulated the Brahmagiri mountain, this continuing for six months. After this a fortunate event took place concerning Nivritti. Once as they were all circumambulating, they saw a fierce tiger, and in the consternation that followed, Nivritti missed his way. While running for his life he entered a cave of the Anjanī mountain, where he saw Gainīnāth who favoured him with his instruction.

On page 50 Mr Pāngārkar says that Dnyāndev wrote the *Dnyāneshwarī* at the age of eighteen in *Shake* 1215, i. e., in 1293 A. D., while the *Dnyāneshwarī* is said to have been completed in *Shake* 1212, i. e., in 1290 A. D. when Dnyāndev was fifteen years old. Even if the second alternative date for his birth is taken as correct, that is in *Shake* 1193 which would be 1271 A. D., his age at the completion of the *Dnyāneshwarī* would be nineteen and not eighteen.

On page 56 Mr Pāngārkar says that Matsyendranāth was going to bring back his *guru* Gorakshanāth who was entangled in the female kingdom. Is this not a mistake? For Matsyendranāth was the *guru* of Gorakshanāth, and as the former was caught in the female kingdom, Gorakshanāth was going to extricate him from there. [This mistake is rectified in the second edition.]

## 8 Refusal Of Brāhmīns To Invest Dnyāneshwar With The Sacred Thread

On pp 63-64 Vitthalpant again appeals to the Brāhmīns (at which place is not mentioned) with a request to admit all of them into caste and invest his sons with the sacred thread, and for that he was willing to undergo any penance. The Brāhmīns replied that for his crime of becoming a *sannyāsi* as a married man before he had a son there was no penance written in the *shāstras* except that he should destroy himself.

On hearing the decision of the Brahmins Vitthalpant determined to follow it and straightway he went to Prayag (Allahabad) and there drowned himself in the junction of the Ganges and the Jumna. Rakhumabai also accompanied him and followed her husband's example. On page 71 it is said that both Vitthal and his wife went to Prayag (Allahabad) to drown themselves but on page 149 Multabai says that their parents went to Badrik Āshram and not to Prayag. Elsewhere in the book it is said that the husband and wife went to Prayag from Āpegaon, and that they did so straightway on the decision of the Brahmins of Paithan and without looking back. If so, then how is it possible that they went from Āpegaon? After the miracle reported at Paithan the children went to stay at Ālandī. On page 67 the case of Socrates is compared with that of Vitthal, and there Mr. Pangarkar says that the Brahmins of Ālandī who announced the punishment of penance to Vitthal had no malicious intention towards him. The true fact is that the Brahmins of Ālandī asked him to go to Paithan and from there bring such written authority of the Brahmins as they at Paithan would willingly accept therefore it was the Brahmins of Paithan and the Brahmins of Ālandī whose decision led Vitthal to go and drown himself at Prayag. At any rate according to Mr. Pangarkar's own statement Vitthal went to Prayag from Ālandī and not from Āpegaon at all. On page 72 it is said that the Brahmins of Ālandī told Nivrattinath to go to Paithan and bring from the Brahmins there an authority for their purification. It was not Nivratti but his father whom the Brahmins of Ālandī had so told. After the miracles of Paithan and on their return from Paithan it is not known that the brothers ever again visited Paithan. After the miracles of Paithan the Brahmins of Paithan gave them of their own accord an authority for purification. Then where was the necessity of the brothers going to Paithan again for the same reason? Again on page 76 it is said that Nivratti went to Paithan with his two brothers and sister with the letter of introduction and recommendation of

the Brāhmīns of Ālandī and put up with Kṛṣṇnājipant Devkule the maternal uncle of his father. It was not Nivrīti but his father who had gone to Paithan with his children with the letter of the Brāhmīns of Ālandī to learn the decision of the Brāhmīns there. The decision was given and it was not favourable to Vitthal, and therefore he went to Prayāg to immolate himself. The statements on pp. 67, 70, 71, 72, 75, 149 are so confused and contradictory that it becomes difficult to draw any conclusion from them [Mahīpatī's own statement in *Bhaktā Līlāmṛit* iii 146-152 and *Bhaktā Vijaya* ix. 6-34 are also somewhat confusing]

## 9. The Miracles at Paithan

In another chapter Mr. Pāngārkar describes the two reported miracles :—(1) The marks of beating on the back of a buffalo were said to be seen on the back of Dnyāndev, and (2) the reciting of the four Vedas by a buffalo. The second miracle is said to have taken place at Paithan in *Shake* 1209, 1 e., in 1287 A. D. On page 28 it is said that in *Shake* 1214, 1 e., in 1292 A. D., at the age of twelve Dnyāndev humbled the pride of the Brāhmīns of Paithan by his various miracles at Paithan, such as making a buffalo recite the Vedas, that he humbled the pride of Chāngdev by making an inanimate wall move like an animate thing, and brought the dead ancestors of a certain gentleman to dine at the anniversary of their death because the Brāhmīns who were invited to dine refused to come, and that he got a letter of purification from the Brāhmīns and went to Pandharpūr, teaching the pious people of that place the secret of *bhakti*, of the knowledge of *bhakti* and of the worship of God, both with and without qualities, also in order to spread the knowledge of the *Bhagavadgītā* which had already come out of the lips of Shṛī Kṛṣṇa, how Dnyāneshwar rendered it into Marāṭhī in *Shake* 1212, 1 e., in 1290 A.D. Of these miracles, that of the wall is said to have taken

place at Ālandī to humble the pride of Chāṅgdev a miracle the Brāhmins of Paithan did not witness at Paithan. In *Shake* 1214 (see Pangārkar's page 29) Dnyāndev was 17 years old, and the letter of purification he obtained from the Brahmins of Paithan was in *Shake* 1209 (see page 82) i. e., in 1287 A. D. at the age of twelve. From Paithan Dnyāndev first went to Newāsa and there wrote his commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* afterwards going to Ālandī to stay there permanently. From Ālandī he went to Pandharpur but never directly from Paithan. At the end of the chapter the letter of purification is given but the author states that wise men differ about the genuineness of it. [See Altekar's similar view in our chapter vi 9 (3)]

## 10 Dnyāndev's Visits To Sacred Places

From Paithan, Dnyāneshwar went to Newasa with his brothers and sister and on their way the buffalo died at Ale. There they buried it and built a tomb over its corpse. At Newāsa he is reported as having restored to life the dead body of a man by the name of Sacchidānand and this very person (it is said) wrote out the *Dnyāneshwar* for Dnyāndev and also the *Dnyāneshwar Vijaya* or The Triumph of Dnyāneshwar. On pp. 35 and 133 Mr. Pangarkar gives correctly the name of Nīranjan Mādhav as the writer of *Dnyāneshwar Vijaya*. On pp. 46 and 92 Mr. Pangārkar has made a wrong assertion that Sacchidānanda was the author of the *Dnyāneshwar Vijaya*. In fact it was Nīranjan Mādhav who was the writer of the *Dnyāneshwar Vijaya* and not Sacchidānanda. After some days at Newāsa, the news of the miracles reported as performed by Dnyāneshwar at Paithan had reached Ālandī and the people there welcomed him and his brothers. But there was there a certain Visobā Chatī who hated saints and was a strict follower of the way of works. He was learned and well behaved but without experience, and he hated Dnyāneshwar so

much that he could not bear even the mention of his name. But on account of the reported miracle of the pancakes he became the disciple of Dnyāneshwar. Even he afterwards was counted as a great saint and had the honour to become the spiritual *guru* of Nāmdev. On page 28 Mr. Pāngārkar says that Dnyāndev had the certificate of his purification from the Brāhmīns of Paithan in *Shake* 1214, i. e., in 1292 A. D., and on page 94 he says that the above mentioned facts, viz., their leaving Paithan, their going to Newāsa and Ālandī, took place during a period of three years from *Shake* 1209–1212, i. e., between 1287 and 1290 A. D., the year when the composition of *Dnyāneshwarī* was complete. During this period they visited, and for some time stayed at, Newāsa, Āpegāon and Ālandī, for the bad opinion about them had already worn off by *Shake* 1212, i. e., by 1290 A. D.

## 11. Was Excommunication Removed ?

Here the question arises (1) If the three brothers were taken to Paithan by their father for the purpose of the investiture by the sacred thread, (2) if even after their father had left them they stayed in Paithan and solicited the Brāhmīns there to admit them into their caste, and (3) if there had been given them a certificate of purification by the Brāhmīns of Paithan of their own free will as a token of the impression formed on their minds by the miracles performed by Dnyāneshwar, *why did the three brothers leave Paithan without the investiture of the sacred thread?* Their social life after leaving Paithan is not known. Whether people considered them as children of Brāhmīns and interdined with them is nowhere mentioned. Even their relatives formerly treated them with contempt, and whether they were now willing to receive them as their relatives now is also not known. If they were popular, and if Brāhmīns were ready to receive them into caste, then one man alone like Visobā Chātī could hardly harm them, and Nivṛitti would have

had no difficulty in getting to eat pancakes. But from the fact that he could not get them, and that others did not offer them it seems their life was not a happy one. The reading of the *Dnyāneshwari* may have attracted people, but it seems excommunication was unremoved.

[These English notes by Pandit N. R. Godbole on Pangārkar's Marāṭhi *Life of Dnyāneshwar* and the queries arising were, we believe the last piece of work done by this able, faithful Pandit.]

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## CHAPTER IX

### WERE DNYĀNESHWAR AND DNYĀNDEV TWO DIFFERENT PERSONS ?

#### **Preface: The Crux Of Dnyāndev Scholarship**

We cannot close Part Two on the Biography of Dnyāneshwar without some discussion of what the late Principal Patwardhan described as 'a naughty point about Dnyāndev.' Prof. R. D. Rānade in his *Mysticism In Mahārāshtra*, page 38, refers to the problem as 'the crux of Dnyāndev scholarship.' *First* we will let Principal Patwardhan himself state the case as he set it forth in his 1917 Wilson Philological Lectures, and Prof. R. D. Rānade's reply, *secondly*, we will attempt to summarize the arguments as set forth by the leading protagonists in 1898 and 1933.

#### A

### THE PROBLEM OF TWO DNYĀNDEVs

#### **1. Patwardhan's Case For**

Writing in his beautiful English, Principal Patwardhan states the problem in the following terms.—'The Dnyāndev of the *Dnyāndevī* and that of the *Abhangs* are two different persons. My reasons for saying so are.—(1) that Dnyāndev the author of *Dnyāndevī* was a worshipper of Shiva while the Dnyāndev of the *Abhangs* was a devotee of Vitthal. For both in the *Dnyāndevī* and *Amṛtānubhav* there are references to Shiva-Shakti, Bhava and<sup>2</sup> Bhavānī, Shankar and Pārvatī; but there is nowhere in the whole of the *Dnyāndevī* the remotest

reference to Vitthal or Pāndurang or Pandhari. There is Ganpati referred to. There are other minor deities alluded to for purposes of illustration, but not the slightest reference to Vitthobā or Pandhari. If Dnyāneshwar the author were such a devoted servant of Vitthal as the whole body of *Abhangs* would lead us to believe, was it possible that in the greatest of his works which has tribute to pay to many another deity there could be no mention of the one deity on whom and on whom alone the whole of his devotional affections are set in the *Abhangs*. The concentrated attention paid to Vitthobā in the *Abhangs* and the absolute absence of even a mention of his name in the *Dnyāneshwari* is a proof as strong as can be, that they are works of two different poets and the one, the author of *Dnyāneshwari* lived and flourished long before the Vitthal cult came into being at any rate long before that cult came to loom large before the eye of the devout long before Pandhari rose into an exalted position among the sacred places or *Tirthas* of Maharāshtra. (2) That the language of the one and that of the other are widely different not only in vocabulary but also in grammar and idiom. Compare the *Abhangs* says Principal Patwardhan, with any verses in *Dnyāndevī* and what a gulf yawns between them in point of grammatical peculiarities and imagery! Strange to say even the *Abhangs* that are known as *Haripāth* are generally considered to be songs of Hari, Shripati, Rāmakrishna, Krishna but not of Vitthal or Pandurang. (3) That the metrical mode we call *abhang* is a variation of the *ovī* metre and was invented later than the 13th or 14th century. Dnyāndev's works are all of them in the *ovī* metre which he wields with a freedom and mastery never attained before or since. For these reasons, and for many others which it is not within the domain of the present subject to mention here, I strongly hold that the Dnyāneshwar of the *Dnyāndevī* was not the one who is so prominent a member of the *Bhakti* school (*Fergusson College Magazine*, July 1918, pp. 9-11)



## 2. Rānade's Reply Against

Prof R D. Rānade replies in English to Principal Patwardhan on the following lines —(1) Concerning the linguistic and ideological differences between the *Dnyāneshwarī* and the *Abhangs* of Dnyāndev, Prof. Rānade holds this to be 'entirely a misconception. The fact that the *Abhangs* now appear to be in a simpler dress than the *Dnyāneshwarī* is due to their having been committed to memory for six centuries past and reproduced through memory,' says Prof Rānade and he continues 'This should account for the comparative modernness of the style of the *Abhangs*. It is for this reason that we might even say that the *Amṛtānubhav* looks older than the *Dnyāneshwarī* because the *Amṛtānubhav* is not reproduced or memorized as much as the *Dnyāneshwarī* itself. If we go to the root-words, we shall find that there is a great deal of identity between the *Abhangs* and the *Dnyāneshwarī*. Nor does the argument from lesser brilliance of the *Abhangs* in point of ideas as compared with the *Dnyāneshwarī* hold much water. We have no hesitation in saying that the *Abhangs* are as brilliant in ideas as, if not even more than, the *Dnyāneshwarī*. They bespeak the very heart of Dnyāndev. The *Abhangs* are the emotional garb of Dnyāndev, the *Dnyāneshwarī* is an intellectual garb, and thus we see the heart of Dnyāndev, his personal experience, and his outlook upon the world depicted even more adequately in the *Abhangs* than in the *Dnyāneshwarī*. To add to this, we have to consider how very similar in ideology the *Abhangs* and the *Dnyāneshwarī* are .. After a careful study of the extreme similarity of ideas between the *Abhangs* and the *Dnyāneshwarī* on the one hand, and the *Abhangs* and *Amṛtānubhav* on the other, nobody will dare to say that they are not from the same pen.' (2) Regarding Principal Patwardhan's argument that 'there is nowhere in the whole of the *Dnyāneshwarī* the remotest reference to Vitthal,' though 'the Dnyāndev of the *Abhangs* was a devotee

of Vitthal. Prof Ranade's reply is One most significant fact has escaped the attention of students of the *Dnyāneshwari* till now In the twelfth chapter of the *Dnyāneshwari* from verse 214 onwards we have a reference to the image of Vitthal holding the *lingam* of Shiva on the head. The fact that the image of Vitthal at Pandharpūr was said to have held over its head the *lingam* of Shiva is attested both by Nivrattināth and later by Ramdas Now as no other image of Vishnu has been known to have held the *lingam* of Shiva on its head there is an unmistakable reference here to the image of Vitthal at Pandharpur which bears the *lingam* of Shiva on its head. To add to this, we must remember that Vitthal-*bhakti* was prevalent even in Ālandī about seventy years before the birth of Dnyāndev There is an inscription in the *Math* of Hariharendra Swami dated 1209 A. D (*Shaka* 1131) that is, nearly seventy years before the birth of Dnyandev where the images of both Vitthal and Rakhumāi are carved on a stone-slab on the pedestal of the *samādhi* (tomb) This is the earliest reference hitherto found to the prevalent Vitthal *Sāmpradāya* even in Ālandī Moreover we cannot say that the references to Krishna and Vishnu in the *Dnyāneshwari* are not references to Vitthal To Dnyandev as to other devotees of Pandharn Vitthal and Krishna are identical Nor can we say that there is no mention of the *Sāmpradāya* of Vitthal-*bhakti* in the *Dnyāneshwari* Though the word Vitthal may not have been mentioned, the word *santa* (saint) which is amply indicative of the Vitthal *Sāmpradāya* is mentioned very often Now *santa* is almost a technical word in the Vitthal *Sāmpradāya* and means any man who is a follower of that *Sāmpradāya* Not that the followers of other *Sāmpradāyas* are not *santas* but the followers of the *Wārkarī Sāmpradāya* are *Santas par excellence* From all these references it is evident that we cannot say that Vitthal or Vitthal-*bhakti* is not referred to in the *Dnyāneshwari* itself Dnyandev was a very broad minded and liberal mystic, and to

him Shaivism and Vaishnavism were identical, not to speak of the different kinds of *bhakti* in Vaishnavism itself. All these facts unmistakably indicate that even in the *Dnyāneshwarī*, Dnyāndev regarded Shaivism and Vaishnavism as of equal count. 'It matters not to Dnyāndev what deity one worships, provided one worships rightly and earnestly' (3). A third argument put forward in favour of there being two Dnyāndevs born in two different centuries, is the presence of a *samādhi* (tomb) at Āpegāon as well as the commonly accepted *samādhi* (tomb) at Ālandī. Prof. Rānade's pages 43-6 should be referred to for his detailed answer on this which he summarizes by saying that 'the Dnyāndev at Ālandī must be taken to be the real Dnyāndev, and if there is a *samādhi* at Āpegāon, it must be regarded as merely an imitation or a memory *samādhi* of Dnyāndev'. For, finally, Prof. Rānade insists that 'the tradition of two different Dnyāndevs is entirely unknown to Nāndev, to Gorā Kumbhār, to Janābāi and to other Saints. Moreover, Eknāth (1528-1598 A. D.) took the Dnyāndev of Ālandī to be the real Dnyāndev' (*Mysticism In Mahānīshtra*, pp 39-44).

## B

### THE ARGUMENTS OF BHĀRADVĀJA AND BHINGĀRKAR

The classic discussion in Marāthī on this important question took place between Bhāradvāja and Bhingārkar. The former's arguments are found in an eight-anna Marāthī publication of 140 pages entitled *Dnyāndev And Dnyāneshwarī* published by G. G. Dābholkar of Akolner in 1931. Mr. Shivrām Eknāth Bhārde, otherwise known as Bhāradvāja of Shevgāon in the Āhmednagar District, who died in 1919, had written in the Marāthī weekly *Sudhānīk* published in Poona a series of articles beginning on December 5, 1898. These are the Marāthī articles now reprinted in which Bhāradvāja main-

tained that Dnyāneshwar, the writer of the *Dnyāneshwarī* and of the *Amṛtānubhav* was not the same as the writer of the *Abhangs* that have always gone under the name of Dnyān dev Haribhakt Shripatī Raghunāth Bhingārkar wrote in 1900 a production of 110 Marāṭhi pages examining the arguments of Bhāradvāja. The following paragraphs give in summary form many of the chief points on both sides though it is impossible to summarize adequately in a few English pages the recondite arguments that cover 140 closely printed Marāṭhi pages.

### 1 Was Dnyandev A Contemporary Of Nāmdev ?

Bhāradvāja's first main position is that Dnyāneshwar the reputed author of the *Dnyāneshwarī* and the *Amṛtānubhav* was not contemporaneous with Nāmdev. In maintaining this position Bhāradvāja makes the following points—  
 First a well known *abhang* gives the date of the birth of Nāmdev as *Shake* 1192 (or 1270 A. D.), called the *Prabhava* Year on Sunday the eleventh bright half of the Hindu month called *Kārtik*. Bhāradvāja contends that this *Prabhava* Year occurs in *Shake* 1189 and not in 1192, but that in 1189 the eleventh bright half of the Hindu month *Kārtik* is not a Sunday. And since the *Prabhava* Year occurs only at regular intervals of sixty years and since also the necessary coinciding factors connected with Nāmdev's birth viz., a Sunday an eleventh bright half, and the Hindu month *Kārtik*, only occur in *Shake* 1309, therefore the birth of Nāmdev must be fixed for the year *Shake* 1309 (i.e., 1387 A. D.). To this contention of Bhāradvāja the reply of Bhingārkar is that according to his calculations, depending on the calendar of Sivel and Dikshit, the eleventh bright half of *Kārtik* was a Sunday in *Shake* 1192 and not in 1309. The only difficulty remaining therefore arises from the name of the year '*Prabhava*'. On this point Bhingārkar holds that the *sāmpradāya* or traditional *abhang* describes the year of Nāmdev's birth by the word *Pranod*

and that *Prabhava* is a misprint for *Pramod*. Our only comment here is that the sole evidence in favour of the misprint theory would appear to be that the word *Pramod* has been handed down orally from one generation of *Wārkaris*<sup>\*</sup> to another. Whilst such a fact must be allowed its full value, yet to establish the correctness of the theory there would be needed an investigation establishing, on grounds quite apart from the present considerations, the relative value of the two competing readings.

## 2. When Did Nāmdev Die?

*Secondly*, Bhāradvāja expresses doubt regarding the traditional date of Nāmdev's death. The *abhang* which has supplied the accepted evidence on this date was written by Nāmdev's daughter-in-law. At his death Nāmdev has been supposed to have been eighty years old and it has been further supposed that Nāmdev's father and mother were both alive. It is also affirmed that the first child of Nāmdev's parents was a daughter, that his mother came to the temple at Pandharpūr from Narsī for the purpose of uttering vows with a view to the birth of a son, and that after prayer and fasting she gave birth to Nāmdev. Bhāradvāja argues that at the time of Nāmdev's birth his father Dāmshetī must have been from 25 to 30 years old, so that at the time of Nāmdev's death the age of the father Dāmshetī must have been about 110. This strikes an impartial reader, says Bhāradvāja, as improbable. To this Bhingārkar replies that cases have been known of people in the Nizām's Dominions living up to the ripe age of 104, and moreover, urges Bhingārkar, how does Bhāradvāja know for certain that Nāmdev's father Dāmshetī was 25 or 30 when Nāmdev was born? As a matter of fact, says Bhingārkar, in the *Bhaktakathāmrtsār* by Chidghan Swāmī it is stated that Nāmdev's father Dāmshetī was

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\* See section on the *Wārkaris* in *Life And Teaching Of Tukārām*, pp 170-3

only 18 when Namdev was born and if this be so then Dāmsheṭṭi would be only 98 when his son Namdev died.

### 3 The Argument from Muslim Influence

*Thirdly*, Bhāradvaja believes that the *abhangs* of Nāmdēv clearly show that Muslims were well established in the Deccan at the time of his writing and he quotes two *abhangs* supporting his view their general purport being that Muslim rule had defiled the people (of the Deccan) and therefore God had become incarnate in the Hindu gods to deliver the people who were saved from their hardness of heart by singing Hari's praises. In reply Bhingarkar affirms that these two *abhangs* of Nāmdēv do not mention the Deccan, and on the other hand that Nāmdēv is known to have gone on pilgrimage to North India, and it is likely therefore that his reference to Muslim rule referred to North India and not the Deccan at all. On the contrary several fascinating stories related by Mahipati in his *Bhakta Līlāmṛit* and current in the traditions handed down by the *Wārkaris* assume the widespread power of the Muslims in the Deccan and the harm they did to the Hindu faith e. g. the Muslim King in the city of Bedar destroyed many temples and turned them into mosques (*Poet Saints of Maharashtra* vol. xi, *Nectar From Indian Saints* p. 157 *Bhakta Līlāmṛit* chapter ix, verse 123). Concerning this widespread power of the Muslims in the Deccan, the point to be borne in mind is that if Bhāradvaja's date of *Shaks* 1309, or 1387 A. D., could be accepted for Nāmdēv's birth, then his emphasis on Muslim power and opposition to Hinduism is quite understandable, since the fourteenth century was one of Muslim transcendence in the Deccan. The crucial fact to be borne in mind in this connection is that until two years before Dnyāndev's death in *Shaks* 1218 or 1296 A. D. we see no sign of Muslim power in the Deccan. This would appear to show that the Nāmdēv who wrote the *abhangs* reflecting Muslim influence and the Dnyān

dev who wrote the *Dnyāneshwarī* could not be contemporaries. The contrast between the peaceful condition of the Deccan in Dnyāneshvar's day and the Muslim invasions in Nāmdev's day is shown by Prof. R. D. Rānade as follows :— 'Dnyāndev lived in the time of Rāmdevrāo of Devgiri. That this Rāmdevrāo was a worshipper of Vithobī of Pandharpūr, is known from an inscription in the temple of Pandharpūr which tells us that he visited that temple in 1276 A. D. (*Shake* 1193) on the full-moon day of *Māṛṣashīrṣha*, and the inscription goes on to tell us that Rāmdevrāo was the head of the religious community of Pandharpūr. It was during his reign that Dnyāndev composed his *Dnyāneshwarī* in 1290 A. D. (*Shake* 1212). Two years before Dnyāndev took *samādhi* (or buried himself alive), that is to say in 1294 A. D. (*Shake* 1216), Allāuddin Khiljī had already come over to Ellichpur with the intention of falling upon Devgiri. His forces were immense and powerful, and he was backed up by the Emperor of Delhī, for which reasons Rāmdevrāo gave him a large ransom, and saved his kingdom. But, in 1306 A. D. (*Shake* 1228), Allāuddin Khiljī sent again against Devgad a large force under Malik Kāphar, and with the help of thirty thousand horses Malik Kāphar was able to ransack the whole country of Rāmdevrāo and carry him to Delhī, where the latter remained a prisoner for six months, and, returning to his kingdom, died in 1309 A. D. (*Shake* 1231). The kingdom of Devgiri did not last long thereafter. It was confiscated by the Emperor of Delhī in the year 1318 A. D. (*Shake* 1240). This tragic end of the dynasty of Rāmdevrāo, Dnyāndev did not live to see. So long as Dnyāndev lived, the kingdom of Rāmdevrāo enjoyed all prosperity' (*Mysticism In Mahārāshṭra*, page 27). Again. 'Allāuddin Khiljī invaded the Deccan in 1294 A. D. (*Shake* 1216), that is to say, about two years before Dnyāndev passed away, while, as we shall see later on, Nāmdev's death took place in 1350 A. D. (*Shake* 1272). Thus there is clearly a difference of fifty-four years between the dates of Dnyāndev's

and Nāmdev's passing away During this half century it is not impossible that the invasions of the Muslims had made great impression upon the minds of the Marāṭhās and hence it is no wonder that Nāmdev refers to these invasions in the *Abhangs* (*Mysticism In Mahārāshtra* p. 185)

#### 4 Nāmdev And Kabīr

Fourthly the story runs in the traditions (or *sāmpṛadāya*) that Namdev met Kabir at Benares, and Kabir's date is *Shake* 1302-42 or 1380-1420 A. D. Should this be so, asks Bhāradvāja, how could Nāmdev have been born in *Shake* 1192 or 1270 A. D? Nāmdev's death took place in 1350 A. D. (*Shake* 1272) says R. D. Ranade in his *Mysticism In Mahārāshtra* (p. 184) Bhingarkar makes the surprising reply that Kabir lived for 300 years!

#### 5 Was Chāṅgdev a Contemporary of Nāmdev?

Fifthly Bhāradvāja maintains that Chāṅgdev who was the disciple of Muktābāi and whose *samādhi* (or funeral service) is described by Nāmdev must have been a contemporary of Nāmdev It was this Chāṅgdev who was at Puntamba practising *yoga* (see *Nectar From Indian Saints* pp. 112-120 *Bhakta Līlāmrit* chapter vii, 41-142) Bhingarkar admits that this Chāṅgdev it was who died in *Shake* 1427 or 1505 A. D., on the 7th day of the bright half of the Hindu month called *Jyesth* which roughly corresponds to our month of May Bhingarkar further admits in his *Life of Dnyāneshwar* (pages 81-82, 86) that it was this Chāṅgdev who was met by Dnyāneshwar and others at Puntamba also that it was the *samādhi* (or funeral service) of this same Chāṅgdev that Nāmdev describes in his *abhangs* where he shows how Chāṅgdev prepared for his burial (see *Nectar From Indian Saints* p. 115 *Bhakta Līlāmrit* vii. 79-84) If these various admissions are taken into calculation it means that Namdev must have



been contemporary with this Chāngdev. Therefore, how *could* Chāngdev have been contemporary with Dnyāndev who wrote the *Dnyāneshwarī* in *Shake* 1212 or 1290 A. D.? Our own reaction to much of this reasoning is that there is no concrete evidence of any kind offered (by either side of the argument) which will enable one to decide the approximate date of Chāngdev upon whom so much depends in working out this fifth point. And when it is remembered that Chāngdev is the name applied to a person or persons covering a period of 1400 years the difficulties multiply, and we can agree with at least one sentence of Prof. R. D. Rānade (see page 15 in his *Mysticism In Mahārāshtra*) where he points out 'Tradition says that Chāngdev lived for fourteen hundred years, which evidently is an impossibility.' Rānade suggests 'there were different Chāngdevs of the same name,' etc. If this be the limit of our information on these names, it means this problem is not only unsolved but well nigh insoluble until some wholly new facts come to light.

## 6. Was There More Than One Bhānudās?

In the *sixth* place, it is recorded, states Bhāradvāja, that the great grandfather of Eknāth named Bhānudās (date about 1448-1513 A. D.) brought from Paithan on the Godāvarī river the images to be installed at Pandharpūr. At Paithan there are in existence to-day certain documents in the hands of Eknāth's descendants proving that Bhānudās took these images in *Shake* 1346 or 1528 A. D. This set of incidents is described by Nāmdev who therefore could not have been contemporary with the writer of the *Dnyāneshwarī* in either 1290 A. D. or 1284 (on this date see R. D. Rānade's *Mysticism In Mahārāshtra* p 31) The story as told by Mahīpati is that when Bhānudās arrived at Pandharpūr, 'Nāmdev was performing a *kīrtan*' (see *Poet Saints Of Mahārāshtra* series volume 2, *Eknāth*, p 115, *Bhakta Līlāmṛit*, chapter xviii 123). On this incident of Nāmdev's *kīrtan* see our concluding section in this chapter.

It would seem clear therefore that Bharadwa (who d. ca. 1449-1513 A.D.) was a contemporary of the Namdev whom I intend to attend to. It is here correct in the present stage of the statement by Bhargavas who asserts that there were two men named Bharadwa of different dates and that the Bharadwa who was Namdev's contemporary was not the great-grandfather of Manth. (Nor is it at all improbable that there were at least two, if not more, Namdevs.) To Bhargavas's statement about there being two different men named Bharadwa and that the one who brought the images was not Manth's grandfather, the reply is made by Bharadvaja from the *Bhakti Vijaya* c. 45 verse 9-14 where Manth refers to the extremely punishing and bear-like way of Lord Bharadwa brought back to Manth the image of Chandrasekhar. The son of Bharadwa of noble qualities was named Chakrasen. He was a extremely pious and was a Vaishnava, always engaged in the worship of Hari. His son was Suryanarayan who shone by the glorious light of his knowledge. His beautiful wife was named Rohini. She gave birth to a son and his name was Manth.

## 7 Muslim Terminology In Namdev Absent From Dnyaneshwar

Lastly Bharadvaja emphasises the fact that in the *Dnyaneshwar* there are no Muslim words while Namdev abounds in them. The answer given by Prof. R. D. Ranade in his *Systicism In Maharashtra* on pages 38-44 is that in about fifty years Muslim rule was established in the Deccan but Ranade would appear to have overlooked Bharadvaja's argument that such a large proportion of Muslim words could not so quickly have found access into the religious literature of the a.e. English, for example has been in use in India for well over a century and comparatively few English words have been assimilated into Marathi usage. On the other hand not only in Namdev's writings but also in Janabai's and others we find Muslim words being used in almost every *abhang*.

The particular conclusion drawn by Bhāradvāja is that had Nāmdev been the contemporary of Dnyāndev there would certainly have been at least a few Muslim words in the *Dnyāneshwarī*, whereas none are found. Therefore Nāmdev must have lived in the 14th or 15th century A D. and not in the thirteenth.

## 8 Bhāradvāja's Theory in Brief

It will be helpful at this point to restate Bhāradvāja's theory which is as follows —There were two men living in different centuries who bore the name of Dnyāndev. The one who was the writer of the famous Marāthī work called the *Dnyāneshwarī* of 18 chapters and 9,000 verses on the *Bhagavadgītā* was named Dnyāneshwar, and the one who wrote the *Abhangs* was named Dnyāndev. The first named, Dnyāneshwar, lived in the 12th century of the *Shake* era, that is, in the 13th century A D, and was born at Āpegāon near Paithan in the Nizām's Dominions and died at the same place where his *samādhi* (tomb) can be seen. He was the son and disciple of one Nivruttināth, was a Shaivite, and wrote also the *Amritānubhav*. This first named does not appear to know anything about the two brothers Nivruttināth and Sopāndev or their sister Muktabāi or about Chāngdev. The second, named Dnyāndev lived in the 13th century of the *Shake* era or the 14th century A D. His birthplace was probably Ālandī in the Poona District and he was buried there. He was a devotee of Vithobā and therefore a Vaishnavite. He went on pilgrimages with Nāmdev, wrote the 65 verses called *Chāngdev Pāsashtī*, wrote also a kind of commentary in Marāthī of 357 verses on the *Bhagavadgītā* and also wrote many *abhangs*. His father's name was Vitthal and his mother's Rakhumāi and at the end of an *abhang* he would close with words which mean 'whose father is the husband of Rakhumādevī.' His father Vitthal was a *sannyāsī* and he had two brothers Nivrutti and Sopāndev and a sister Muktabāi. The Dnyāndev whose lifework is

described in the traditions ( or *sāmpradaya* ) of the *Warkaris* of *Mahārāshtra* is the second of these two men.

## C

## CONCLUSION

## Certainty Impossible With Present Evidence

Weighty as are the considerations brought forward by Principal Patwardhan and of Bharadvaja by Shevgaon in favour of there being two Dnyandevs, we feel they have not proved their case, as many of their points are capable of being answered. On the other hand the theory of two Dnyandevs would help to clear up some anomalies which otherwise seem insoluble. For example it might mean that the unique Marathi poem the *Dnyāneshwari* was after all written by Dnyaneshwar who was much older than either fifteen or nineteen when he wrote it and much older than 21 or 25 when his end came. How baffling this problem of two Dnyandevs is in some of its aspects will appear from one fact alone in this discussion a fact not referred to in any part of the foregoing. In the foregoing section 6 ( Was There More Than One Bhanudas ? ) of Part B in this chapter we have stated that Bhanudas arrived at the Pandharpur temple just as Namdev was performing a *kirtan*. But when we refer to Mahipati's account of Namdev's *kirtan* in the *Bhakta Līlamrīt* chapter 18, verses 121-123 we read 'Just then Nivrīti Dnyandev Sopan, Namdev Sāvātā (all Vaishnavas) and Mukṭābāi the storehouse of goodness, arrived on their pilgrimage. Also Kabir Rohidas, Gorn the Potter, Gonabāi Janabāi the servant of Namdev and Rajāi all noble *bhaktas*. This company of pilgrims was seated by the Eagle-platform and Namdev was performing a *kirtan*, when Bhānudās suddenly approached' (see *Eknāth*, vol. 2 in this series, p. 115) Particularly to be noted is the fact that here Bhanudās, who was born about 1448 A. D., is said to arrive at

a *kīrtan* which is also said to be attended among others by Dnyāndev who died in 1296 A D How *can* such a contradiction be reconciled? Dr. Abbott's footnote on p. 115 of the volume entitled *Eknāth* in this series is as far as we can go, and it not only leaves the problem 'unsolved' but discloses another perplexing factor, viz, how far Mahīpatī has telescoped his narratives by allowing the personalities of one century to appear in the record of a later age. Dr. Abbott's note reads 'Neither Vitthal Kavi, nor Mahīpatī in his *Bhakta Vijaya* chapter 13, verses 136-147, name the *bhaktas* present at Pandharpūr. Keshav Swāmī, in his *Eknāth Charitra* (*Life of Eknāth*), chapter 14, verses 75-78, and followed by Mahīpatī here, makes Bhānudās a contemporary of Dnyāneshwar and the group of saints that tradition usually associates with him. This anachronism may perhaps be best explained by the probable fact that neither Keshav Swāmī, nor the author from whom Keshav Swāmī obtained his information, knew the dates of Bhānudās or Dnyāneshwar, and therefore had no difficulty in making them contemporaries to him, all belonging to the distant past.' This is the kind of anachronism that must remain until additional facts appear which are not at present available

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PART THREE

THE MESSAGE OF DNYĀNESHVAR  
THE MAHĀRĀSHTRA POET

CHAPTER X

INTRODUCTION TO THE DNYĀNESHVARĪ

1 The Heart Of The Dnyāneshwarī

(1) *Richness Of Its Language*

In the first volume of his *Marāṭhī History Of Marāṭhī Literature* Mr Laxman Rāmchandra Pāngārkar has a chapter (16th) of 78 pages setting fourth the heart of the *Dnyāneshwarī*. Omitting details as being of no special interest to readers in general, the following outline summarizes Mr Pāngārkar's most interesting points. About his own poem Dnyāneshwar claims that it is the crowning ornament of all literary work. Having completely overcome the sentiment of love and the other nine sentiments I have put a crown on the head of peace, says Dnyāneshwar. The Marāṭhī language is a veritable mine of peace, and *Dnyāneshwarī* has opened a mine of Brahma knowledge for all and has made this earth a happy and delightful place. The Marāṭhī language is a treasure-house of nectar and this book, which can be easily understood by anyone, whether a child or a grown up person has the power of giving *moksha* to all, simply by its being listened to. The poem is full of beautiful allegories and of fine figures of speech of which Mr Pāngārkar gives several examples. 'These are so complete in themselves that one keeps on wondering at Dnyān

eshwar's great mastery not only in the spiritual field but also in the field of literature. In his third chapter Dnyāneshwar sets forth lust and anger as being like cobras residing near the store of knowledge, or like tigers that haunt the valley of sensual happiness, or like wild tribes standing on the path of praise. These two evil forces will drown a man without water, will burn him without fire, and will get full hold of him without his knowledge. They will kill him without any weapon and tie him up without any rope. In his eleventh chapter the poet shows that just as the clouds cover the sun, or as moss covers water, or as snakes coil round a sandal tree, so does ignorance cover up knowledge' In our summary of Mr. Pāngārkar's enriching 78 Marāṭhī pages for the benefit of English readers the following paragraph division is our own as are also the paragraph titles

## (2) A True 'Bhakta'

Mr. Pāngārkar shows how in chapter 12 Dnyāneshwar sets forth the characteristics of a true *bhakta*. A real *bhakta* never knows what it is to hate anyone. He never makes any distinctions between himself and others, just as the earth never thinks of helping the good only and rejecting the unworthy, and just as water never thinks of quenching the thirst of the cow only and poisoning the tiger, so the true devotee has the same attitude to a friend and to a foe. Just as a tree gives shade to the one who planted it and also to anyone who would cut it down, or as the sugar-cane is sweet alike to one who waters it and to one who uproots it, so a true devotee is good to every one. When Dnyāneshwar sings the glory of the *Gītā* he says that while the Vedas are enriching, yet they are open only to the three higher classes, they do not give the right of *moksha* to women or to Shūdras. So in order to make up for this deficiency the Vedas again took birth in the form of the *Gītā* and they have made *moksha* open to every one in this world. The *Gītā* never inquires whether a man is high or low, it is as

free and open as is the sunlight to all alike. The *Gītā* gives *moksha* to anyone without distinction—it comforts and satisfies all—it is a veritable Ganges full of the nectar of knowledge. The *Gītā* is the very image of God in the form of literature.

### (3) *The 'Bhagavadgita' Summarized*

Dnyaneshwar gives the main themes of the *Gītā* as follows. Chapter 1 of the *Gītā* speaks of the dejection of Arjun. In chapter 2 *karma yoga* is made clear. In chapter 3 *karma* is defined and explained. In chapter 4 it is said that all *karma* should be offered to God and should be done in the name of God. In chapter 5 the principle of *yoga* is set forth with a hidden meaning. In chapter 6 on *yoga* study it is shown how one should practise *yoga*—the posture of the body and the condition of the mind or the mental attitude that is necessary and the results of such meditation are given. In chapter 7 four classes of devotees are indicated. In chapter 8 come the questions: What is Brahma the eternal one? What is the knowledge of self? What is the knowledge of the elements? *Adhidaiv* is the life-giving energy or the supreme *Purush*, i. e. God. *Adhi Yajnya* means the knowledge of sacrifice. How can one think of God at the time of death? All these questions are considered in the 8th chapter. In chapter 9 we find the heart of the *Gītā* for the secret of the heart of Lord Krishna is made known here. Chapter 10 and 11 deal with different deities and incarnations and the vision of the universal form of God. Chapters 12 to 15 deal with devotion and knowledge of the Supreme Being. Chapter 16 sets forth that knowledge which is the means of attaining *moksha* and also deals with the ignorance which hinders it. Chapter 17 emphasizes that while giving up ignorance and accepting knowledge one should take with him the Scripture as one's companion. Chapter 18 is the crowning chapter and contains a unification of all the theories set forth in the preceding seventeen chapters of the poem.



(4) *The Path Of 'Yoga'*

Mr. B. G. Tilak in his *Gītā-Rahasya* says of Dnyāneshwar that he has given prominence to *yoga*, that is, to breathing and physical exercises. But Mr Pāṅgārkar holds that this is not correct. For when Dnyāneshwar speaks of *yoga*, he means the union of *jīva-ātmā* with the *Param-Ātmā*. In chapter 12 Dnyāneshwar says the path of *yoga* is difficult and painful, but that those who take to the path of *bhakti* never know what is pain or toil. When there is true inward peace, one can attain the goal without the hard practice of *yoga*, for he realises that his soul and God are one and the same. Dnyāneshwar's teaching emphasizes self-conquest over the senses, but not in the same way as does Buddha. Dnyāneshwar does not say, 'Give up married life and leave your homes'. He says, 'Do not give up your homes but lead a righteous and a pious life and you will get *moksha* without trouble. Do not forget yourself in the pleasures of the senses, no sensible man will say that there is any real happiness in such things. If a mouse sits under the shade of a cobra's hood, can he depend on the pleasure of the shade? One who has conquered his mind, his reason, and his ego, has under his sway the whole empire of Brahma. The way to control the mind, reason and ego lies in one's devotion to spirit and not to material things.

(5) '*Karma-Yoga*'

On *karma-yoga* Dnyāneshwar shows that whatever duties are prescribed by Scripture, according to race and the stage of life, those duties we ought to perform. One should give up all attachment to *karma* and should harbour no desire for the fruit of *karma*. Then naturally he will attain to *varāgya* (or the state of being without desire or passion). Through *varāgya* he will get knowledge and through knowledge he will attain to *moksha*. Although one acts in the world by means of the knowledge of the self, yet he does not get the

attachment for the world in this way he gets free from the ties of *karma*

### (6) *Dnyān Yoga*

About *dnyan yoga* we need to remember that *dnyān* means knowledge of self. Every other form of knowledge is thrown into the background by this knowledge of self. All that is visible is the shadow of Para Brahma and before the light of knowledge all that shadow will disappear. Then will it be hard for knowledge to remove the faults or drawbacks of the mind? The holiness and power of knowledge can never be limited. *Anjan* (an eyesalve) which the yogis put in their eyes in order to be able to see and get hold of the treasure of the highest bliss, is this *anjan* of knowledge. Knowledge is the place where *karma* ends. Knowledge is also the place where worldly tendencies become lame where thinking power becomes blind where the senses forget attraction for worldly things and where the mind loses its nature speech is silent and man realizes and sees Brahma, i. e., the self without any great effort

### (7) *Dnyān Bhakti*

Concerning *dnyān bhakti* Dnyāneshwar shows that *vai rāgya* (detachment from worldly desires) must be joined to study and then *dnyān abhyās* becomes fruitful and one attains the real self. *Dnyan-bhakti* is the highest of the four stages of *bhakti*: the other three are (1) the *bhakti* of the afflicted, (2) the *bhakti* of those desirous of knowledge, and (3) the *bhakti* of one who is desirous of wealth. *Dnyan bhakti* is the highest. A man of this stage realizes the self he knows he is not different from Brahma, and he realizes completely that the world is a dream. The one who sees and the things that are seen are not different man himself is Brahma and he sees Brahma everywhere. Lord Krishna says: The *dnyāni* (one possessing knowledge) is my soul just as the wave kisses water from every side, or as light

as in the sunbeam, so the *dhnyānī* is with me (Kṛiṣṇa) always and everywhere

### (8) *The Human Merged In The Divine*

Dnyāneshwar states at the end of his poem that Lord Krishna speaks thus to Arjun. 'Oh dear Arjun, you are no other than myself. One looks in a mirror and sees his reflection. "I" and "You" have lost their separate individuality. Concentrate fully your mind on me, for the mind should not have any thought but of me. If you look upon me as living in every existing thing, and if you worship me as such, you will lose the separateness of yourself and be merged in me.'

## 2 'The Study Of The Dnyāneshwarī'

### (1) *Professor N. R. Phātak's Lectures*

One of the best discussions in English of the teaching of Dnyāneshwar's greatest Marāṭhī poem, the *Dnyāneshwarī*, appeared in the English columns of the *Subodh Patrikā*, the weekly organ of the Bombay Prārthanā Samāj from the issue of September 29, 1935 to that of November 10, 1935. Over the well known initials 'V. N. N.' there was published under the title 'The Study of the *Dnyāneshwarī*,' the summary of lectures delivered on this subject at the Prārthanā Samāj in Bombay by Professor Narahar Raghunāth Phātak under the auspices of the *Sangat Sabhā* during September, October and November of 1935. To these articles we are entirely indebted for the following excerpts, and we would take this opportunity of requesting the Prārthanā Samāj to publish these excellent lectures in full both in English and Marāṭhī. It is impossible to give more than a brief selection from Professor N. R. Phātak's exposition, since this took up some twenty columns of the weekly *Subodh Patrikā* and could not have been less than ten thousand words. Moreover, as many of these columns were highly technical, we shall avoid these aspects of the sub-

ject and restrict our selection to such points as are calculated to be of interest to the general reader in English. We have added some of the paragraph titles.

### (2) *The Work Done By The Poet Saints*

In the issue of the *Subodh Patrikā* for December 6 1936, there was given the summary of a *final* lecture by Professor Phātak in which he brought to a close *the entire series* of his lectures on the Saints of Mahārāshtra by a brief sketch of what had been accomplished by Dnyāneshwar Nāmadēv Eknāth Tukarām and Ramdās. Professor Phātak pointed out The Saints of Maharashtra brought about a synthesis of religious ideas in the old Hindu faith and gave it a new direction which has since been known as the *Bhāgavata Dharma*.

Dnyāneshwar began his new interpretation of the *Gītā* at a time in the 13th century when India had already begun to feel the effects of the influx of Muslims in India both in its political and religious aspects. Before Dnyāneshwar the religious thought of India was locked up in the Sanskrit language which had long ceased to be the people's spoken tongue. The great founders of the schools of philosophy and religion like Shankara, Rāmānuja, Mādhava and their commentators and disciples imparted their teaching in Sanskrit. It was only Jainism and Buddhism that began to teach in the *Prākṛit* (common or ordinary) languages current in their times. That was one of the reasons, if not the main reason, of their hold on the masses and the great moral revolution they could effect in their day. The wave of religious reform was passing all over the country before and during the time that these saints wrote and made their own synthesis of religion.

### (3) *A Reformation Of Hinduism*

Dnyāneshwar in his work interprets the *Gītā* originally. He insists on action. And he interprets *karma* as described in the *Gītā* in his own way. He does not encourage miracle-mong

ering He defines clearly what is a *santa* (saint) in which Eknāth carries his teaching even further. The follower of truth with humility and purity, being in the world yet living as if he were out of it, is a real saint. And his task is to build up and not to destroy the elemental passions in man, harnessing them to a righteous will and to the purposes of God in this world. The teaching of Dnyāneshwar appeals to reason, and even a free-thinker today will find much to learn from him in the domain of ethics. Irresponsible writers and speakers have run down the saints of Mahārāshtra as the ruin of their country, who taught the laity nothing better than *bhakti* to the accompaniment of *tāl* (cymbal) and *vinā* (lute). But that is a one-sided, if not an entirely erroneous, view to take. What they did was not unlike the work of Luther, Erasmus and Melancthon in the West in the days of the Reformation. They did not preach to make the people other-worldly. They insisted rather that this world could be turned into a better and a holier place to live in, if some of the acids in human nature could be dissolved. They went to the foundations of character and told us, in the native tongue, how it could be purified, strengthened, ennobled by turning the mind of men Godward. Hence their teaching and example have a message for all time, both as literature and as a philosophy of life.

(4) *Background Of 'Bhāgavata Dharma'. Buddhists, Jains, Upanishads, Muslims*

'In the last lecture on the *Dnyāneshwarī*, Professor Phatak gave 'a masterly survey of the numerous currents and under-currents of history and religion, of sects and creeds out of which grew subsequently the *Bhāgavata Dharma* as founded by Dnyāneshwar, and culminating in Tukārām.' Professor Phatak said 'The history of *Bhāratwarsha*, dating back to 500 B. C., threw up in the field of religion three main forces as protests against the apotheosis of *yadnya* (sacrifice) and sacrifice of animals as laid down in the *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* of Vedic

religion. These were the rise of Buddhism, Jainism and the Upanishadic philosophy respectively. Out of these, Buddhism proved the most powerful opponent of ancient Vedic practice. It laid a successful campaign against the sacrifice of animals in the name of religion and against the elaborate ritual that had gathered round it. The apostle of Jainism though not so powerful effected a similar change in the outlook of men on religion. And finally the Upanishadic philosophy substituted meditation and knowledge of sacrificial fire and the ritual that had gathered around it. When Hinduism was re-installed in the seat of authority in India it took, along with the best in Buddhism, also its idolatry into the Hindu fold. Along with the revival of Hinduism came the worship of many gods and goddesses which were unknown to Vedic religion as also the division of Hindu society into castes in their most rigid form. At the time that the Muslims came down from the north, in wave after wave, as invaders of India, the Hindu monarchs of India and their Brahmin priesthood had become complete strangers to their respective duties as protectors, leaders and teachers of society. They were either lost in luxury and indolence, or waged wars for purely personal and selfish ends. Religion had ceased to be a living influence in society or had degenerated into formalism and ritualism conducive to the domination of a caste.

#### (5) *Dnyaneshwar's Revolution*

This was India when the Nath *Panth* (sect) came on the scene to purify and democratize religion and rescue it as a leaven of society. They succeeded in demolishing the fabric erected by superstition, dogma and black magic. It was in direct lineage from the Nāth *Panth* that Dnyāneshwar derived his *Bhāgavata Dharma* as based on the synthesis of many philosophies made in the *Bhagavadgītā*. Dnyaneshwar's *bhakti yoga* is a new synthesis of *dnyān* (knowledge of God) *karma* (works) and *upāsana* (worship) that was not only to work

out a revolution in the social and religious life of Mahārāshtra but practically in the whole of India. For it spread its influence far and wide through Rāmānanda and Kābīr on the one hand, and Eknāth, Nāmdev, Tukārām and Rāmdās on the other. The *Dnyāneshwarī* is full of indirect allusions to the contemporary state of Hindu religion and society and their degeneration. The subsequent events in the history of the *Bhāgavata Dharma*, and in the preaching of it by Eknāth, Nāmdev, Tukārām and Rāmdās will be found to be but an enlargement of the fundamental teaching of Dnyāneshwar. It is only when we read and seek to understand the *Dnyāneshwarī* as against the historic background outlined above, that we realise what a revolution its teaching worked out in the mentality of the people, and how it served to unite India and fix the Indian outlook on life on the sure basis of a pure form of faith in God and service of fellow-men. The torch that blazed forth and lit up the path of life across four centuries was first lit by Dnyāneshwar with the help of the *Bhagavadgītā*. It made Mahārāshtra a new force in the life of India from the 13th to the end of the 16th century. And as we are on the eve of a new revival and a new orientation to our activities, the book has again become popular..

(6) *The 'Bhagavadgītā' As Expounded By 'An Out-Caste Of Society'*

Professor Phātak's first lecture on Dnyāneshwar to the *Sangat Sabhā* of the Bombay Prārthana Samāj in September, 1935, as summarized in the *Subodh Patrikā* of September 29, 1935, stated 'The *Bhagavadgītā* is a scripture which is rightly regarded as worthy of deep study by all those who would know what India teaches as the true gospel of life. It is now practically accepted that its central teaching is action, right action, and not inaction or running away from the world. The *Gītā*, in a way, synthesizes the ancient thought on the subject and liberalizes it in certain respects by emphasizing the

thought of the Upanishads and by going beyond the Vedas in making the precepts of religion available for all irrespective of sex creed or caste. To Marāṭhi readers there is no better exposition of this teaching of the *Bhagavadgītā* than the *Bhavārtha Dipikā* of Dnyāneshwar popularly known as the *Dnyāneshwarī*. The book is the fount and origin of the cult in Mahārāshtra known as the *Bhāgavata Dharma*. Dnyaneshwar himself an out-caste of [Brahmin] society as he was born to a *sannyāsi* wrote the work to hold before the Hindus of his time an ideal that would unite them all in common worship, and save Hindu society from the fissiparous, corroding influences all around it in the North and the South, as typified in the advent of Islam, the inroads of the Mahanubhav Panth (see p. 14) and the rise and spread of Jainism and its offshoot, the cult of the Līngyats.

#### (7) What The Dnyāneshwarī Aimed At

The political and social condition of India in the days of Dnyāneshwar was already revealing signs of disruption through foreign influence. The Vedic Religion as such was being either misunderstood misused or misapplied. Dnyaneshwar was himself a yogi (ascetic) and an erudite scholar of that religion and philosophy. If he had so willed it, he could have as well written a treatise and commentary on any one of the three pillars of Hindu philosophy popularly known as *Prasthāna Trayī* (the *Gītā* the *Upanishads* and the *Brahma Sūtras*). This depth of thought and the power to unfold it in Dnyāneshwar are clear to all who have even dipped into another of his writings known as the *Amṛtānubhav*. He chose the *Gītā* as the one scripture of all others for his "beaconlight of faith," because he felt it was more liberal and broad based than the Vedas and because of its appeal to all young and old women and men the twice born as well as the low born. And again, the *Gītā* as the dialogue between Arjun and Shri Krishna, stressed action as against inaction stressed



playing one's part well and disinterestedly in this world as the way to salvation, as against running away from it. It was the philosophy of action which, to adopt the words of Henry Jones, made for practical idealism. The *Dnyāneshvarī* is a book generally regarded as difficult to read because its language today seems antiquated. Dnyāneshwar himself lights up the texts of the *Bhagavadgītā* with poetry that is full of the choicest words and of imagery coined in the mint of life itself. It is, indeed, "music married to immortal verse". As a poem on an abstract theme, it is a work that will abide as a permanent treasure of Marāṭhī language and literature. The thread running through the treatment of his subject, and the sidelights thrown on it by his poetic genius, which is both "the effluence of wisdom" and "the eternal melody" of the soul, make it clear that he desired above everything else to preach to his own age a gospel of life that could shake off apathy, drive away anarchy, and restore to his generation the faith that overcomes mountains by unifying all in the democratic cult of *Bhāgavata Dharma*. Dnyāneshwar offered to Mahārāshtra, in his golden vessel of poetry, the elixir of life to Mahārāshtra as a whole, and proved once more that religion is not a mere luxury of the soul or the idle song of an empty day, but a tonic, a moral bath that purifies, resuscitates and makes life vigorous and strong, holy and wise.

### (8) *All Actions Viewed As God's Work*

In his *second* lecture Professor N. R. Phatak 'dwelt at great length on the stages along which Dnyāneshwar takes his readers to his description of *bhakti-yoga*. He pointed out, in the first place, that the writer treated of *bhakti* as the last stage from *karma*. Beginning with the discussion of *karma*, Dnyāneshwar passes on to tell us what is *dnyān* (spiritual knowledge), and then leads us on to the knowledge of *bhakti*, which finally prepares us to perform all actions as being God's work in this world. Dnyāneshwar unfolds to us his own view of

*bhakti* principally in the ninth and the 18th chapters of his commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* (see verses 157-71 following the *Gītā shloka* 11 of chapter Iλ and verses 431-42 on the *Gītā shloka* 55 of chapter XVIII for a real devotee of God) Strictly speaking the discussion on *bhakti yoga* begins in the *Gītā* from the 13th chapter and its summation is to be found in the final 18th chapter as pointed out above. But Dnyāneshwar deals with the subject at great length in his ninth chapter with all the power and illumination of his poetic genius. If we remember aright his definition of *karma* as an inescapable fact of human life on this earth the conclusion is inevitable that it can be performed aright only after right knowledge .. which must precede right action and right worship And the knowledge is of God

#### (9) *Right Knowledge Leads To Right Worship*

What is God? asks Prof Phātak. What is His nature? What are His attitudes, so far as man can know them by his finite mind imperfect will and changing heart? How is He to be known? What does the understanding imply? What are its marks, within and without? What transformation does it work in an individual's being and living? How does the knowledge inspire *nishkāma karma* (disinterested action)? What is disinterested action? Why is it impossible to achieve this by mere knowledge, and possible only with the love of God and *bhakti* following upon that love? These are the questions that Dnyāneshwar tackles in his great work in strict accord with the teaching of the *Gītā*. He who knows not God aright, is apt to worship Him in the wrong way and is also likely to go wrong in his action. The devotion to God of an ignorant and, therefore, superstitious man, assumes various forms, all false or one-sided in their nature. Thus One who is nameless is given a name the Formless is invested with form the immortal and unborn are made to take birth and to pass over He who is full and therefore feels no hunger or thirst, no need of sleep

or rest, is made to rest, is put to bed, is offered food and water both. He who is all-pervading is confined within a corner and worshipped as if He were a human being to be coddled, bribed and flattered .. This ignorance about God must first be destroyed "When many gods die, then, alone, the one and true God comes into His own," said Browning. Another point to be noticed in connection with Dnyāneshwar's conception of *bhakti* is that not even animals are shut out from it, much less are *shūdras*, women, and the classes branded as inferior God is open for worship to all who bring to that worship the right mind and the right heart. *Karma* (action) rightly performed purifies one's being, the purification leads us to the right knowledge of God, the knowledge attaches us to Him; the attachment is strengthened and transformed into love, and love finally fulfills itself in dedication and complete surrender to His will .

#### (10) *The Preparation For 'Bhakti'*

'What then is the preparation for *bhakti*?' That is the next question Dnyāneshwar proposes to himself, and he answers it fully in his commentary on the ninth and eighteenth chapters of the *Gītā*. He draws on the *Bhāgavata Purāna* and the *Mahābhārata* as well for his illustrations in this connection. That apart, he mentions that the first thing that a man ought to do in order to set his feet on the path is to conquer *ahankāra* (pride) .. The self-conceit that has to be conquered and laid low assumes many forms. It may be the conceit of scholarship and learning. . It may be the conceit of rank, birth or of the accident of wealth and fortune The self masquerades itself in many disguises which all raise a wall between us and the God whom we would know and worship in spirit What is needed in one who would be fit to enjoy the fruits of *bhakti* is humility, the complete surrender of pride, the childlike attitude of the soul, its sweetness, innocence purity and trust....

(11) *The Fulfilment Of Bhakti*

This is the *bhaktas* final beatitude his ecstatic contemplation of God and communion with Him. This steadies him in the performance of all tasks in turn for he knows that they all flow from Him and return in fulfilment to Him. To prove this unity in diversity, this union of the *bhakta* with his God and yet his separateness from Him Dnyaneshwar has drawn upon two or three apt similes and analogies that of the flower and the nose which inhales its fragrance that of the face and the mirror which reflects it that of the lamp that kindles another light. While suffused with the fragrance of the flower the being that enjoys it is at one with the flower. While lost in contemplation of his own image in the mirror the being forgets the mirror. The light that kindles, imparts its own effulgence to the enkindled light. And therefore, the one is like the other though not the same. So does, the *bhakta* forget his own identity while wrapt in communion and prayer. The highest point of *bhakti* its crown and culmination, is *advaita* (identity of the soul with God) its reminiscence can be nothing else but *dvaita* (distinction between the soul and God). That is the position of Dnyaneshwar. While in the body the *bhakta* ever remembers, worships, reveres and serves God as the servant does his Master with this difference that in his soul the *bhakta* realises that he is one with his Maker and retains full possession of that relationship and bond of union. Some who love Him and who have no ties to bind them down, He leads by the Spirit. Others who love Him but cannot entirely cut themselves away from the ties of this world He also leads by other means, like uttering His name, trust in Him and performing all acts in dedication to Him. Like the true pilot that He is, He neglects none but leads them all across. But we must be in His leading and learn to worship Him truly. The saint loves *bhakti* of this kind of implicit faith, complete surrender of the will and of dependence upon Him alone..

(12) *Knowledge Of The Supreme*

In his *third* discourse Professor N. R. Phatak expounded fully Dnyāneshwar's conception of *dnyān*, by which Dnyāneshwar, of course, means (following here the leading of the *Bhagavadgītā*) what gives us the knowledge of God, the Ultimate Reality, the Perfect Being, whom he calls in his exposition of the 25th *śloka* of chapter II '*Purushottam*' Dnyāneshwar explicitly states that the *Purushottam*, the Supreme Being, is not to be known by the mere light of reason or logic; not to be contained by the heart that longs for its contact, or by the mind that would hold it by meditation. Much less is he to be appropriated by the wavering, ever fitful something between desire on the one hand, and the resolving mind on the other. The knowledge of God is thus different from the ordinary knowledge by which man wins enlightenment and insight into the material nature of the universe in all its aspects. That means, to put it in modern terminology, that the sciences cannot lead us to the knowledge of the *Purushottam*, the *Paramātmān*, the Perfect Being, or the 'Absolute of philosophy'. What constitutes this spiritual knowledge and the consequent illumination it brings, is best stated by Dnyāneshwar in his exposition in the 18th chapter of the *Gītā* (see *śloka* 20 and verses 529-37) Of course its description, if it is to be conveyed in the language of man, can only be given by images. And Dnyāneshwar employs them fully and to purpose. So he says — "*Dnyān* is that in the orientation of which the thing known and the known become one. It is as the sun which cannot see darkness. It is as the ocean that cannot distinguish the river flowing into and mingled with it. . Thus *dnyān* destroys and dispels all sense of separateness. Unity and harmony are established within, projecting and embracing all objects of all thought. Like the gold transformed into ornament, or like bubbles on the surface of water, one cannot exist without the substratum of the other. Ornament is not without gold

bubble is not without water " The Supreme One can be won by love and *bhakti* and the fruit of it is self realisation, and self perfection.

(13) *Marks Of A Dnyānī (One Who Possesses Knowledge Of God)*

'What are the marks of him who has become a *dnyānī* in this sense? For we can only know him as Dnyāneshwar emphatically points out by certain attributes, the attributes which are as valuable for the good of this world as they are valuable to the man himself for his personal salvation (see chapter \ *śhlokas* 3 4 and 5 and Dnyāneshwar's exposition of them). First, he is always at one with God. Secondly he has his *buddhi* (intellect) in full power and perfection then, he has *dnyān* (knowledge of God) that never fades next, he is above all illusion or self-delusion he is patient, full of meekness and forgiveness and ever guided by truth. He has self-control. He regards pleasure and pain as equal. He is not swayed by fear and is ever courageous. He is characterized by the spirit of harmlessness equality and equanimity He is ever contented calm and austere not taken in by fame nor depressed by want of it or by ill fame. All the attributes which at the opening of the 16th chapter are described as divine, belong to him. Such men know God and are led by that knowledge to love Him and through that love, like God Himself they turn the wheel of sacrifice by which the world subsists, and are always very few and far between. But their example and precept constitute the uplift of humanity and the blessedness and peace of the world.

(14) *The Pathway To The Ultimate Reality*

'In his *fourth* discourse Professor Phātāk dealt with Dnyāneshwar's exposition of *dnyān* and the way to it. It may be otherwise called the pathway to the Ultimate Reality.. He who is not able to free himself from the engrossment of the

senses, can never attain to the height of spiritual truth implied in contact with the Divine. The Divine is not to be known by any other means, but the Divine makes those means. And in this process we have to make our own effort and lead up. None else can do it for us. Here we are our own friends or our own foes. If we let ourselves be shut up in the prison-house of life, then we remain for ever in the darkness of self-hypnosis, which then we embrace as light, like 'the parrot in the cage that winds itself round and round the rod that forms the perch and clings to it all the more, for it knows not that it can let it go if it so chooses. . So if you would let God lead you unto Him, first you have to know that your real self is different from the sheaths of selves that enwrap it, and hide its identity with God. Man must first realize that he is made in the image of his Maker, before he comes to know Him or attains to oneness with Him. With all your desires fixed on the objects of the senses, with your heart full of affinities with the world without, with your mind distracted and driven hither and thither by the pre-occupations of worldly existence, how can you find the peace, concentration and repose of mind, so indispensable to reflect the self within, and to see it clear of all aberrating media? What, then, is the pathway to this knowledge? First, the deep realisation that what we think to be real and permanent, is unreal and perishable, that life is a vale of tears, at the same time that it is a valley of soul-making. . Self-knowledge implies, above everything else, the knowledge of what our real self is, in what it is enmeshed, and the way to free ourselves from the many snares of life that defeat the object of our existence, so that ultimately we rise above them, and become one with the highest Truth, the highest Good, and the supremest Beatitude, that together are God the Perfect Being. Each one of us has to pass through three stages till we come into our own, from sleep to dream, and from dream to awakening, which is the daylight of the soul. But before we attain to the last, we must first realise

that when we think we are wide awake we are but dreaming or lost in sleep. The evil in this world has to be grasped by the consciousness, that it may be free from it. It is in that sense that the world has to be deeply understood as the vale of tears, that we may then turn it into the valley of soul making. See *Gītā* chapter ix *śloka* 33 verses 490-93 thereon as also chapter viii, *śloka* 15 and verses 140-151

### (15) *The Two Wings*

*Viveka* (discrimination conscience) and *vairāgya* (freedom from worldly passions) are the two wings on which we can mount up to the vision of God and bring down the fire from heaven. Then comes *bhakti* or the practice of the presence of God, or, as they say entering into silence, where, alone, we realise that we are one with our Divine Father one with the Love which understands and with the Peace that passeth understanding (see chapter xvi of the *Dnyāneshwari* opening verses 10-13) Here comes the crucial question. Are these the modes and methods by which we can take advantage of the awakening and rise to self realisation? To which Dnyaneshwar answers that persistence in the path opening out before us is the one thing needful. When Arjun implores that the way pointed out is far from easy to follow Krishna answers, in the words of Dnyāneshwar "fitness or worth comes to him who steadily perseveres in the path. There is no mine of fitness other than the one that one himself works up by his own effort." Dnyāneshwar significantly concludes. Granted practice or use to be the *sine qua non* of attainment the other means to it are steadfast faith, diligence and self-conquest or the proper control of the senses. When the truth has been once glimpsed to follow it without wavering is faith. Doubt at every step, means self-destruction. The pursuit of the spiritual path is itself the dissolution of all doubt in it. Truth is not attained without faith. It is not fortified without austerity and concentration. And, it does not fructify in selfless action without love



and *bhakti*, which alone gives us the insight, deepened by experience, that the One is in all, and all are in the One; and, therefore, we must look upon all as ourselves and serve them as we would serve ourselves. And this self-realisation is the supreme joy of life, the state of blessedness that is the crown of self-knowledge. That is supreme happiness (see chapter v, *śloka* 27 and 28, verses 158-160), the merging of one's heart, will, mind and soul into God, the realisation that we are in Him, and He is in us. Such men become really detached from the bondage of the flesh, know the truth as it is, realise the *saṁsār* (affairs of life) as they should, and attain peace ..

### (16) *The Crown Of It*

'How do these *dnyānīs* (possessors of the knowledge of God) worship the *Paramātmān* (the Supreme Spirit), whom they have thus known and felt in their own being? They worship Him synthetically as cosmic vision. They bow down to Him as a personal God seen and felt in all objects of all thought separately. They see the One that pervades the whole and many. They see the many in the One and as leading to the One. Without Him nothing is, and the many are but the reflections of Him that is One without a second. *Dnyān* leads to the love of God; and the love of God brings the illumination that is *dnyān*. And both fulfil themselves ultimately in disinterested work. Action so performed is its own reward and benefits the world as well. As to the joy, blessedness, and beatitude of this spiritual attainment, Dnyāneshwar describes it as *Brahma swarūp* (the form of God) and Tukārām welcomes it as *paramabhāgya* (supreme bliss) '

### (17) *Spiritual Security*

'In his *fifth* lecture Professor Phātāk said the 22nd *śloka* of the ninth chapter of the *Gītā* might be freely rendered as follows "To those who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, to those ever harmonious, I bring full security," that is, "I secure to them what is not already possessed, and I secure

to them the preservation of what is already possessed." This refers, not to worldly goods, said Prof Phatak, 'but to the treasures of spirit. It means, on the assurance of the Lord that what is spiritually gained, is never lost and what is gained, to it more is added on as the devotee grows more steadfast in his worship, and lives in the faith that without God nothing is and that with Him are all joy and blessedness and peace. What has to be conquered on the path of spiritual attainment is greed and its twin brother *ahankara* (pride). Even the greatest ascetic is not free from it. After all we fail to realise that in this world we are entirely in the hands of God, that we can do nothing if He does not will it so, and that if we trust Him implicitly then He certainly will not give us up. Our acquisitiveness makes us rich in the goods of this world if we but become equally acquisitive in adding on day by day to the treasure of the spirit we shall enrich our being more rapidly. Then, even sudden death cannot rob us of the state which is ours by complete assimilation of our being to the wishes of God. If we love God as our Father and Mother and if we walk in this world led by that love and light then our lives cannot but have the fruition which is an inevitable accompaniment of such a mode of living. Spiritual attainment is no lottery waiting on fluke, or on chance circumstances. It is the transformation of our entire being within and without. And as Mr Phatak illustrated it from the story of Pralhad and Dhruva, if you are awakened to the fact that this life is worth living you cannot and ought not to postpone it to old age. For the prize is in the process. If a man persists in this path with dependence on God, in Whom alone, he is convinced he lives, moves and has his being then the security of such a soul becomes the care of Him Whom he trusts.

(18) *The Synthesis of Dnyān (spiritual knowledge) Bhakti (devotion) and Karma (works)*

In his sixth lecture Professor Phatak emphasized that Dnyāneshwar does not make any difference between the

*bhaktā* ( the devoted one ), the *dnyānī* ( the man of spiritual knowledge ), and the *yogī* ( ascetic ). For the essence of it all lies in the mind, the heart and the will of man being fixed on God and on Him alone. The mind knows Him, the heart loves Him, and the will does what the heart approves and the mind knows. So that action, love and understanding cannot be divorced, one from the other, but are complementary to one another, and lead up together to a godly life. Such a one does not renounce the world but transforms it through his life in, and love of, God.

### (19) *Work Is Worship*

'God Himself, as the *Gītā* puts it, works in this world out of love for it and to draw it near unto Himself. He is the Supreme Knower and yet does not rest and retire from the world. He is love, and out of that love He not only starts the world into space but sustains it and carries it along. And like God, the man who is a true *dnyānī* ( possessor of spiritual knowledge ) and *bhaktā* ( devoted one ) must live. It is said in the *Gītā* that God becomes flesh from time to time in order to drive away evil from this world, to save the good, and re-establish faith in the hearts of men. And the *bhaktā* and *dnyānī* who is at one with God, must do likewise. He cannot renounce *sansār* ( the affairs of life ) and attain self-perfection and self-realisation. He lives his life in this world and does all that is expected of him "as in the great Taskmaster's eye". His faith is no blind faith, his knowledge of the Supreme is not for himself alone. His worship of God must issue forth in the service of his fellow-beings. It is only in active intercourse with his fellow-beings that he can develop the divine attributes. These attributes all point to a full participation in the life of the world, and not the renunciation of the world. The renunciation is of the heart and not of the belongings. The supreme test of a *bhaktā* is his character, which develops only in the stream of life. The *bhaktā* is one who is not

*vibhakta* (that is, separate from God) He is *upāsaka* that is, one who rejoices and reveals in *upāsana* (service) which really means being ever near God in tune with the infinite.. And the one test of such God realisation is the proper service of man, our consecration in that service

### (20) *The Value Of Saintliness*

Tukārām said, "The Saints are here for the blessing of the world and they must spend themselves in toil and service to mankind. Thus the *bhakta* becomes the regenerator of society and its saviour. Society needs saints and *bhaktas* of the true kind as it needs scientists and practical men. And the former are more practical than the so-called practical men of the world, for they are not self centred. Nature needs the scientist to harness its liberated energies to the service of man and to raise him up. The soul of man needs the *bhakta* and the *dhnyān* to liberate it and make the service of the scientist a blessing and an uplift and not a curse, nor a multiplication of means that blot out the humanity in man. The saint working in and for the world shows clearly what is dross and what is gold in man. So the *bhakta* the saint and the *dhnyān* are not spared their task of service to the world by their love of and faith in God. All the great souls of the world like Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Zarathustra have toiled on in the world, bearing their crosses in order to educate the world out of its meannesses, its evil propensities, and to lead it up to the path of right thinking, right faith and right actions. The saint lives for the world and thus alone is selfless. He works according to the higher law of the self illumined by the grace of God. The *bhakta* or saint according to Dnyāneshwar lives in and for this world in an all embracing love. For he does not renounce the world, but lives in it and yet above it. The saint, the *bhakta* and the *dhnyān* are not thus different, but the three manifestations of the *nishthā* (loyalty) and, therefore are not absolved from duties in this world. They do not

renounce the world, except in the sense that they renounce selfishness. Rather they are the best exemplars of how to realise the spiritual in the temporal, the permanent in the transient and perishable, and how to fortify the spirit of man against the mean and the vulgar that surround us in this world on all sides. As the poet Keble puts it—

We need not bid, for cloistered cell,  
Our neighbour and our work farewell,  
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high  
For sinful man beneath the sky,  
The trivial round, the common task,  
Will furnish all we need to ask,  
Room to deny ourselves, a road  
To bring us daily nearer God.

That is true renunciation which keeps on revolving the wheel of sacrifice by which the Supreme Spirit sustains and *evolves* the universe.'

### 3 'The Intellectual Mystic'

#### (1) *Prof R. D. Rānade's 'Mysticism In Mahārāshtra'*

In this introduction to the *Dnyāneshwarī* we have had a glimpse by the help of Mr. Pāngārkar into 'the heart of the *Dnyāneshwarī*.' We have studied, though only in summary form, Professor Phātak's luminous exposition of the teaching of this unique Marāthī poem. Now let us sit at the feet of Professor R. D. Rānade in the enriching third chapter of 92 pages in his *Mysticism In Mahārāshtra*. Classifying 'the great mystics of Mahārāshtra according to the different types of mysticism illustrated in them, they fall into the following groups,' says Professor Rānade 'Dnyāneshwar is the type of an intellectual mystic, Nāmdev heralds the democratic age; Eknāth synthesizes the claims of worldly and spiritual life, Tukārām's mysticism is mostly personal, while Rāmdās is the type of an active saint. A man may become a saint,

and yet as Monsieur Joly has pointed out he may retain his native temperament. The different types of mystics that we find among the Marāthā saints are not a little due to original temperamental differences. Between themselves these great mystics of Mahārāshtra have produced a literature which will continue to be the wonder of all humanity that cares at all for an expression of mystical thought in any country without distinction of creed, caste or race (pp. 20-21) Dnyāneshwar is thus presented as the example of Intellectual Mysticism Nāmdev of Democratic Mysticism, Eknāth of Synthetic Mysticism Tukārām of Personal Mysticism and Rāmdās of Active Mysticism The entrancing chapter by Prof. R. D. Ranade opens with sections dealing with the place and the time of the *Dnyāneshwarī* tracing the poet's spiritual lineage to Gaurināth and Nivrattināth and showing Dnyāneshwar's respect for his *guru* and his own humility Then comes a section of 29 pages expounding the *metaphysical* aspects of the poem 36 pages dealing with its *ethics* and 32 pages with its *mysticism* A few of Professor Ranade's English translations from the *Dnyāneshwarī* under each head will illustrate his method and its enriching result for his readers.

## (2) *Dnyāneshwar's Metaphysics*

### (1) *God The Central Reality*

We are thus introduced to the central point in Dnyāneshwar's mystical theology namely devotion to God Is it not wonderful Dnyāneshwar asks, that people should keep repeating that there is no God, when God has filled this world in and out? Is it not their misfortune that makes them say that God is not? That one should fall in a well of nectar and yet try to get himself out of it! What can we say about such a man except that he is unfortunate? The blind man is moving from place to place for a single morsel of food and yet he is kicking aside with his foot the wish jewel that has

happened to come in his way, simply because in his blindness he cannot see it *Dnyāneshwarī*, १, 300-305' (Rānade, p. 62)

### (ii) *God Cannot Be Known In His Entirety*

'The greatness of God is so infinite that Dnyāneshwar has no difficulty in saying that God cannot be known in His entirety. Ages have elapsed, he says, in discussing the nature, the greatness, and the origin of God as the sea animals cannot measure the greatness of the sea, as a fly cannot cross the heaven; similarly the sages, and the gods, and all the beings on the earth, being born of Me, cannot know Me. Has descending water ever climbed up the mountain? Much rather would a tree grow up to its roots, than the world born of Me ever hope to know Me *Dnyāneshwarī*, १, 65-69' (Rānade, p. 65)

### (iii) *God Seen Only By Intuitive Vision*

"I have shown you My *Vishva-rūpa* (universal form)," said Krishna, "but you have not yet seen it." Arjun replied that the *Vishva-rūpa* (universal form), which would be seen only by intuitive vision and not by physical vision, was as good as unshown to him unless he were endowed with that great intuitive power. "You are making a mirror clean," says Arjun, "and holding it before a blind man, you are producing a beautiful song, but only before one who is deaf." *Dnyāneshwarī*, १, 154-159' (Rānade, p. 67)

## (3) *Dnyāneshwar's Ethics*

### (i) *Humility*

'A humble man is he, says Dnyāneshwar, who feels any word of praise as a burden upon him. Even though people may praise him for the qualities which he really possesses, such a man is disturbed, as much as a deer is disturbed when it is surrounded by a hunter, and oppressed, as when a man

feels oppressed when he is trying to swim his way through a whirlpool. One should never allow respect to be shown to oneself; one should never so much as be the cause of the praise of one's own particular greatness. A man must feel mortified when people bow down to him. "Let my very existence cease," he should say. "let my name and form be hidden; let all beings try to shun me. Such a man retires to solitude every day and seems to live as if on solitude; he makes friendship with the wind, talks with the sky and loves the trees in a forest as dearly as his own Self." *Dnyāneshvarī* xlii, 185-202 (Rānade p. 72)

### (ii) Knowledge

What is knowledge? Knowledge consists in realizing that God alone is; that beyond Him and without Him there is nothing; that the knowledge of this world and of the other world is tantamount to mere ignorance. He alone has attained to knowledge who becomes fixed in the idea that God alone is real and all else an illusion. He who determinately maintains the reality of spiritual knowledge is like the fixed and constant star in the heavens. What is the use of any other knowledge? Is it not like the lamp in the hand of a blind man? On the other hand, he who reaches the end in the light of contemplation holds reality as it were in the hollow of his hand. *Dnyāneshvarī* xlii 616-632 (Rānade p. 82)

### (iii) Ignorance

In such a man, we may say ignorance reigns; for by his instability he is brother to an ape. His mind roams like an ox that is let loose, or like a storm of wind, or like a blind elephant that is intoxicated, or like a fire that burns on a mountain. He is immersed all the while in sensual pleasures. To him there is no other occupation except sensual delight. On Sundays he distributes food in order to please *Bhairava*. On Mondays he runs to the *lingam* to worship it with *bela* leaves.



In this way, he tries to please god after god. He worships perpetually without remaining silent for a moment, as a courtesan tries to attract man after man at the doorway of a town. A devotee, who thus runs from deity to deity, may be said to be ignorance incarnate. ..Such a man takes delight in society, is pleased with the noise of a town, takes pleasure in talking gossip, and when anybody talks to him about the real way to reach God, he creates such a noise that he refuses to hear it. *Dnyāneshwarī*, III, 653-84' (Rānade, pp. 83, 85 ).

#### (4) *Dnyāneshwar's Mysticism*

##### (1) '*Bhakti*' The Way To God

'Dnyāneshwar is indeed the originator of the *Bhakti* School of thought in Mahārāshtra, and he tells us that God can be attained by *bhakti* alone. "How very often should I tell thee, O Arjun? If thou longest after Me, worship Me. Care not for the dignity of birth. Mind not the consideration of nobility. Throw away the burden of learning. Cease to be inflated by the beauty of form and youth. If thou hast no devotion towards Me, all this is as good as nought. If thou servest all kinds of dainty dishes in an earthen pot, and keepest it on the highway, it becomes useful only for the dogs. He who has no *bhakti* for Me, is only inviting the miseries of existence:" *Dnyāneshwarī*, I, 430-440' (Rānade, p. 111 ).

##### (2) *The Man Who Reaches The End*

'In the seventh chapter he tells us that rare must be the man who reaches the end. "Out of thousands of men, scarcely one has got resolution enough, and out of many such resolute men, there is rarely one who really comes to know. Just as out of innumerable people in this world, rarely one here and there is selected to be a soldier, and out of such innumerable ones is made an army, but among these there is scarcely one who enjoys the hand of victory when iron is penetrating into his flesh. Similarly, in the great flood of

devotion, thousands of people enter, but scarcely one reaches the other end of the stream *Dnyāneshwarī* vii. 10-13 (Ranade, pp. 126-7)

(iii) *God The Lover And His Devotee*

In one passage of the twelfth chapter *Dnyāneshwar* even speaks of God as the Lover and the devotee as His beloved. Thus, however he tells us under the influence of that erotic mysticism which finds the relation between husband and wife to be the nearest analogue to the relation of God and devotee. "He who knows no hatred of any being who like the earth, neither upholds the good nor discards the evil who like water does not assuage the thirst of the cow nor kill the tiger by becoming poison who thus has friendship with the whole world and is as it were the fount of pity who knows no egoism who has no sense of mine-ness to whom happiness is as good as sorrow who in point of sufferance is equal to the earth who has given the contentment a constant abode in his heart in whose mind the individual Self and the universal Self both live together in close unison who having achieved the highest stage of *yoga* delivers over his mind and intellect to Me he alone, O Arjun is the true devotee. He alone is the true *yogi* He alone is truly absolved. The relation between us is the relation between wife and husband. To talk about these things itself brings a sweet infatuation. I would rather have not spoken these words, had not My love made me speak of it. Happy am I that I have reached this happy contentment. As soon as these words were uttered God Krishna began to nod in joy *Dnyāneshwarī* xii, 144-163 (Ranade, p. 130)

## CHAPTER XI

### DNYĀNESHWARĪ CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

BY

DNYĀNLSHWAR

*Note.* (1) The following translation of the last chapter (the 18th) in the *Dnyāneshwarī* is based on the well known and extremely able Marāthī commentaries by Sākhare (4th edition 1924) and Bankatswāmī (1927). (2) Verses 1 to 1190 were translated by Dr Justin E Abbott in 1932, though verses 957 to 1057 had been omitted, (3) the missing verses 957 to 1057, and from verse 1191 to the end (1810), with Eknāth's verses at the close, were supplied by Pandit N. R. Godbole in 1932-4 (4) This translation was begun by Dr. Abbott on December 15, 1931 and he passed away six months later on June 19, 1932. How he was able at such a time of physical weakness, to translate over a thousand verses of such difficult Marāthī poetry, passes our comprehension. It is a moving demonstration of his love for the Poet Saints of Mahārāshtra.

#### 1. Introduction And Adoration

1. Victory to God! The pure Being! Giver of every kind of blessing to those who are His own! The violent wind-storm that tears to shreds the net of clouds of rebirths and old age.  
2. Victory to Thee! God Almighty, Destroyer of every kind of evil, Fruit of the *Veda* and *Shāstra* tree and the Giver of that same fruit!  
3. Victory! Victory to God! the All-in-All, Lover of those from whom the attraction of the objects of our senses has disappeared. Thou dost control the power of *Kāl* (the god of time, of changing phases and of death). Thou art Thyself free from all change.  
4. Victory! Victory! to Thee, O God! Free from earthly vexations, and in Whom is manifested the strength of abundant joy. Thou art the ever-

living Destroyer of all sins and the Primal cause of everything  
 5 Victory! Victory! to Thee! Oh perfect God! Inspirer of  
 great joy, continual Destroyer of sin, and the Pillar of the  
 Universe. 6 Victory! Victory to Thee! Oh God! Self-  
 Glorious! Thou art the sky that holds in its womb the earth  
 cloud. Thou dost enjoy creation and dost destroy the *sansār* \*  
 7 Victory! Victory to Thee! O Holy God! Destroyer of  
 Ignorance as an elephant destroys a garden, Remover of  
 lust Governor and Subduer of the sensual desires O Ocean of  
 compassion! 8 Victory! Victory to Thee! Of form indivisi-  
 ble, and utterly disdainful of the pride of desire, light of the  
 heart's chambers in Thy reverent *bhaktas* \* and Destroyer of  
 life's affections! 9 Victory! Victory to Thee O God, With-  
 out a Second! The great Lover of the humble! Devoted to  
 those who are Thy own! Worthy of worship! Uninfluenced  
 by *māyā*! 10 Victory to Thee! O God! Our Glorious Guru,  
 who art the Wish Tree of the supreme Spirit beyond imagina-  
 tion and who art the seed whence comes the seed of divine  
 knowledge. 11 How can I seek to praise, by special technical  
 terms Thee to Whom no adjectives can apply? 12. The  
 adjectives which I use in describing Thee I am ashamed of  
 because I know that Thy form is invisible. 13 But the ocean  
 has its exact limits until the moon is seen to arise 14 The  
*Somakānt* jewel‡ does not render worship to the moon by  
 sending out its own rays, but it is the moon that draws them  
 out. 15 I do not understand how it is that when Springtime  
 begins the tender leaves appear on the trees. Why should my  
 own condition be held to be the same? 16 When the rays of  
 the sun fall on the lotus bud it drops its modesty and blossoms  
 forth and when salt touches water it becomes one with it  
 17 So whenever I remember Thee I forget myself just as  
 when a man has eaten to the full he loses himself in satisfaction.

On *Sansār* and *bhakta* see appendix to *Nectar From Indian Saints* p 461 and p 437 respectively

‡ A fabulous gem.

18. Thou hast been like that to me Thou hast removed far away my self-consciousness. Thou hast given my speech an ecstasy in the form of praising Thee 19. And if I praise Thee, trusting to my own memory, then I have to choose between speaking of Thee as one with qualities or as one without them. 20. But Thou art of one essence only, and how can I divide Thee into a part with qualities and a part without qualities? Is it better to split a pearl to put it in its setting, or to put it in as it is, whole? 21. Thou art not praised by calling Thee Father and Mother, rather by my childish language is a strain put upon Thee. 22. If I call myself Thy servant, how shall I dare to call Thee my master? This simile is a stale one. How shall I rightly praise Thee? 23. O Giver of blessings, if Thou art of one supreme spiritual essence, then I am in danger of making objective that which is subjective 24. So one cannot praise Thee in exactly truthful language, and silence on my part is the highest honour I can pay Thee.\* 25. The best way of praising Thee is by silence. The best way of worshipping Thee is by using no outer forms of worship, and as to nearness to Thee, to lose one's own sense of identity is the profoundest peace 26. Just as a man overcome by delirium talks incoherently, so, O Mother God, is my praise of Thee. Still bear with me.

## 2. The 'Bhagavadgītā' Viewed as a Temple

27. So place Thy stamp upon my power of explaining the meaning of the *Bhagavadgītā*, that it may be acceptable to the assembly of the good. 28. Hearing this, Shrī Nivṛitti exclaimed, 'Don't mention that request again and again in our presence To turn iron into gold, how many times does one have to rub it on the *parīs* touch-stone?' 29. Then

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\*In these two verses, 24-25, Dnyāndev shows his sense of untruthfulness in the use of anthropomorphism, and by using in reference to God any similes or descriptions, since no outward forms can ever represent exact truth

Dnyāndev made request that this favour be granted him, that God should give His attention to this book 30 The *Gītā* is a temple studded with jewels the topmost jewel chapter 18 is the *Chintāmani* (a jewel that supplies all wants) and that is what symbolizes the purpose of the *Gītā*. 31 There is a saying among people that if the dome of a temple is seen from afar, the divinity inside the temple is thereby seen 32 So it is in this case. Reading this one chapter alone gives the whole of the *Bhagavadgītā* and of the *Shāstras* 33 For this reason I have called this chapter the pinnacle of the *Bhagavadgītā* temple. 34 After placing the pinnacle on the temple, there is no further work to be done. So this eighteenth chapter means the completion of the *Bhagavadgītā* 35 Vyāsa himself was by nature a very clever artist and he quarried a jewel mountain in the form of the Vedas and dug out blocks of stone in the form of the Upanishads. 36 He dug out three kinds of stone, small and great and built a wall around the temple in the form of the *Mahābhārata* 37 In this enclosure he very cleverly chiselled blocks of stone uniform in size in the form of the knowledge of the soul and well smoothed consisting of the conversation of Krishna and Arjun about earth and heaven. 38 Then with a mason's plumbline in the form of Nivritti's teachings and drawing in the ground stakes in the form of the meaning of all the *Shāstras*, he gave the building its special shape in the fourfold form of salvation.\* 39 Thus the building gradually rising in the fifteenth chapter reached the top floor of the temple. 40 The sixteenth chapter is the base of the temple dome, and the seventeenth chapter completed the dome. 41 At the top of the dome a pinnacle was erected and to it Vyāsa fixed a banner in the form of the *Bhagavadgītā* 42 So what we see in all the former chapters of this book is the temple rising layer by

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That is *salokata sam pata sarūpata sayujyata* See Chapter xxvi section 5

layer, and the eighteenth chapter shows the completion of the temple. 43 Such a work is not for concealment, as this pinnacle clearly shows. So that this eighteenth chapter sets forth the complete meaning of the *Gītā* from the beginning to the end. 44. Thus did Vyāsa very skilfully erect this temple of the *Bhagavadgītā* and in many ways give protection to men. 45. There are some who walk around the temple while repeating God's names (i. e., by committing the *Gītā* to memory). Others under the pretence of listening, find in its shade protection from the sun. 46 Some listeners, taking with them the *pān-supārī* and money of attention, enter into the inner shrine of its meaning in the form of the knowledge of nature. 47. Some by knowledge of the self quickly meet with the Soul of the World, Shri Hari. Yet in the temple of salvation all have equal share. 48. As in a banquet given by some great personage, the first and last diners have the same kind of dishes, so every one can obtain salvation by listening to the *Gītā*, by meditating on its meaning, and by committing it to memory. 49. So the *Gītā* being the temple of Vishnu, the eighteenth chapter is the pinnacle clearly seen by all. This distinction of chapters I have made purposely. 50. How all the different chapters were formed up to the seventeenth, and all their connections, I shall now make plain, 51 just as the waters of the Ganges and the Jumnā are different as streams, yet they are one from the standpoint of water.\* 52. Without destroying their forms, the half-male and half-female form of Shiva become one body and appear in the form of Nateshwar, half male and half female. 53. As the days go on towards full moon, its phases follow one another, but these changing phases are not what really belong to the moon itself. 54. Just as the four parts of a *shloka* show the divisions of the verses, so the division into chapters gives an appearance of a division in their contents. 55. But from the point of view of its meaning, the *Gītā* contains no varia-

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\* Bankatswāmī and Sākhare here disagree in verse order

tions just as there is only one string that runs through the various pearls. 56 By uniting many pearls one necklace of pearls is formed, but the beauty of each pearl is one and the same. 57 When flowers are used to make a garland, their numbers can be counted but their fragrance cannot be counted. In the same way are the *ślokas* and chapters of the *Gītā* to be considered as one message. 58 There are seven hundred *ślokas* and eighteen chapters in the *Gītā* but what God said has only one meaning there are no differences there. 59 And I not deserting that same method, have made the *Gītā* plainly understandable, and using that method I ask you now to listen.

### 3 Arjun Talks With Krishna On Faith & Works

60 At the close of the seventeenth chapter the very last *śloka* is what God said 61 Oh Arjun! if without faith in the Divine Essence you depend on actions, they are all in vain. 62 Hearing what God had said, Arjun approved by the nod of his head, and replied, You have condemned those who place their faith in the value of actions. 63 Such persons are blind through ignorance and therefore cannot see the All Pervading God. Then how can the value of belief in God suggest itself to them in any of their thoughts? 64 Unless the two *gunas* *raja guna* and *tama guna*\* leave a man his faith remains small. How can it fix upon the Divine Name? 65 But to be without faith in God's Name is like embracing the blade of a lance, or like running on a tight rope, or like playing with a scorpion. 66 Thus dependence on the law of works is very harmful for it is not only harmful but the effect results in rebirths. 67 If religious actions are properly performed (by one trusting to God's name) the performer of them acquires divine knowledge. But if one's faith is on these religious actions, then their improper performance will take him to hell 68 When one has spent much



time over the performance of religious actions which did not lead to salvation, how can his mind be sure he will obtain it? 69. Letting go therefore the lame doctrine of the law of works and discarding it entirely, pay your reverent devotion to the healthy doctrine of the abandonment of worldly possessions and affections 70 So I must try to acquire that knowledge of the soul which is free from fear about the results of the law of works 71 They are as it were the charms of knowledge, or the good field in which it ripens, or the string by which knowledge is drawn 72 The right thing evidently is that the world should practice both *sannyās* (indifference to the results of actions) and *tyāg* (abandonment of worldly things) Let me now request God to explain these clearly. 73 Thinking thus in his mind, Arjun put the questions in order to know the exact meaning of *tyāga* and *sannyās*. 74 The reply which Krishna gave to these questions, and in making the meaning plain, is contained in this eighteenth chapter 75. According to the law of one thing causing another, each chapter has developed from the previous chapter Listen now to Arjun's question and the answer

#### 4. Arjun's Doubt And His Longing For Fellowship

76. Arjun, thinking of what God had said at the close of the seventeenth chapter, felt a certain doubt 77. In reality he was convinced regarding the innermost meaning of what God had said, but he could not bear to have God remain silent 78 Even after a calf has satisfied itself, it does not wish the mother cow to go far away This is always so in the case of devoted love 79 By such love as this one desires to speak to the loved one even if there is no special reason for doing so Having seen him once, the desire is to see him continually. Having enjoyed a thing once, the desire to enjoy it again is doubled 80 Such being the nature of love, and Arjun being one in whom it was exemplified, he began to feel sad regarding God's silence. 81 In personal fellowship it is possible to enjoy

that which is impossible to mere sense-perception just as one looks in a mirror to see his face which he cannot see without a mirror 82. For when conversation ceases, the enjoyment which was being enjoyed also ceases. How then could Arjun who had once tasted that enjoyment endure the silence? 83 Therefore with the pretext of wishing to know the difference between *tyāg* and *sannyās* Arjun asked God to open up the teaching of the *Gīta* as one opens out a garment. 84. This eighteenth chapter therefore is not really an eighteenth chapter it is the whole of the *Gīta* in one chapter just as when a calf sucks a cow the latter gives her milk all at once, not bit by bit. 85 Although the conversation had really been finished God again paid respects to the *Gīta* by resuming the conversation. Would my Swami refuse to converse with his disciple? 86. Sufficient of this! Arjun said to God, I especially ask you to listen to me. *i. e.* *O Mighty Armed One I wish to know the meaning of sannyās* Also *O Lord of the Heart Destroyer of the Demon Keshi I wish to know the meaning of tyag* 87 Oh my Lord Krishna though *sannyas* and *tyag* are separate words, yet both are closely connected in meaning just as are the words *sanghāta* and *sangha* (multitude and a collection of men). 88. I understand that the words *tyag* and *sannyās* simply indicate *tyag* (abandonment) 89 But if there is any difference in the meaning of the two words, may God make it plain. Then Shri Mukunda (Krishna) replied, There is a difference 90 But oh Arjun, just as it has seemed to you that *tyāg* and *sannyas* have the same meaning so in a way I regard this as true. 91 Both these words certainly indicate *tyāg* but the reason for a difference in meaning is as follows 92. To discard actions absolutely is called *sannyās* and the abandonment of the pride and fruit of action is called *tyāg* 93 So listen attentively concerning what *results* of actions should be discarded, and what actions *as such* should be discarded. This I shall plainly tell you 94 In jungles and on

mountains, trees spring up of themselves, but rice, irrigation and beautiful gardens do not flourish in that way. 95 Grass grows without being sown, but rice will not grow in that way, for rice fields do not develop without planting the rice 96 The body comes in the course of nature, but the ornaments put upon it have to be prepared Water is obtained from a river without special effort, but a well has to be dug 97. So the regular works (such as bathing), and those appointed for certain occasions (such as ancestor-worship) are actions performed naturally because so prescribed, but one who desires the result of such actions cannot have them without special effort.'

### 5. Shrī Bhagavān's Message To Arjun

*Shrī Bhagavān (God) replied that the abandoning of such actions as produce certain desired results is called 'sannyās' by some writers, and some wise men define 'tyāg' as abandoning the fruits of actions.*

98 Shrī Bhagavān (God) continued 'Some desired results are the cause of the horse-sacrifice and the like, and various offerings, 99 such as the sinking of wells, tanks, pleasure gardens, and the grants of land, founding of towns, and other such like religious acts, 100 all of which are really desired and therefore are the root cause of the desires, and compel the enjoyment of the results of those actions 101 And, Arjun, when one arrives in body-town, one cannot refuse the experience of birth and death 102 Whatever has been written on the forehead (by Fate) cannot be avoided, do what one may; just as a fair or dark complexion cannot be washed away. 103 Just as no one is free from a debt until he has paid it in full, so an action done from a desire for its fruit compels one to receive the fruit '104 Oh Arjun, if one does an action supported by a desire even unwittingly, it compels one to receive the fruit even if he did not wish for it, just as when one goes on a battlefield casually and is pierced by an arrow shot at random. 105 If raw sugar is put in the mouth without knowing it to be so, it will cause a sweet taste, or if one should step on

burning coals thinking them to be dead coals, they will scorch just the same. 106. This being the natural power residing in those acts that produce fruit he who is desirous of final deliverance (from rebirths) should find no pleasure in them. 107 On the contrary O Parth (Arjun) just as one vomits poison so he should get rid of all fruit producing actions. 108 The doing so is popularly called *sannyās* (discarding of all actions) So said He who sees the inner thoughts of men (Krishna) 109 He added Just as fear of robbery is avoided by discarding money so if those actions that produce fruits are discarded the desire for them goes away 110 The rites that are observed at the time of lunar and solar eclipses, and the rites observed on days devoted to ancestral worship, 111 and the rites to be observed when a guest arrives, all these are the everyday works. 112 Just as in the rainy season the air is filled with angry clouds, and as in spring the forests double their beauty and as the beauty of youth shows itself in the youthful body 113 or as the moon stone sends out its lustre through the moon or as the sun lotus blossoms out from the sun's rays the cause being from within not from the outside 114 so when the regular routine has added some of the occasional observances they receive the higher name of Occasional Rites. 115 And as for those daily rites which have to be performed morning noon and night—just as sight is not to be considered as superior to the eye 116. or as one does not gain without effort the ability to walk with the feet or as brightness is in the lamp light itself 117 or as sandalwood has fragrance of its own and no other fragrance is needed because fragrance is its predominant character so all of these get their ability from within themselves. 118. So these rites popularly called the Regular Rites O Parth (Arjun) I have explained to you, as well as the occasional ones. 119 Because these regular and occasional rites *must* be performed there are those who speak of them as being barren. 120 When one is satisfied with eating hunger departs so also the producing

of fruits is automatic in the regular and occasional rites. 121. When impure gold is put into the furnace, the impurity is taken from it and its lustre increases, so also is the result of the regular and occasional rites, 122 faults at once vanish, and the predominant character of the soul shines brightly forth in the one who is to enjoy a good and happy end 123 Although the fruits of regular and occasional rites are so enormous, still their roots should be lopped off, just as one abandons a child born under the Mūla star (because inauspicious). 124. Just as the Spring grows creepers and gives new foliage to the mango tree, but the Spring passes by without touching it, 125 so, without violating the rules of actions, give your attention to the performance of the regular and occasional rites, but regard the *fruit* of these actions as you would a vomit. 126 This rejection of the fruit of actions the knowing ones call *tyāg*. And now I have caused you to listen to what *tyāg* and *sannyās* are. 127. When *sannyās* is performed by one, he is not affected by works arising from desires, and actions that are expressly forbidden, do not harm because being forbidden they are not performed 128 By rejecting the fruits of actions the regular and occasional rites vanish, as when a head is cut off the body perishes 129 When the grain has ripened, what happens to the stalk is the same as in the case of actions, and then the knowledge of the *Ātmā* (soul) of its own accord seeks entrance. 130 When therefore these two, *tyāg* and *sannyās*, are performed they become fit for the knowledge of the soul 131 But if this union with the knowledge of the soul is missed, then if *tyāg* is performed only casually it is really not *tyāg*, and one falls into increased entanglements 132 Medicine that is taken without any knowledge of the disease is like poison, and if food is not taken, will not hunger end the life? 133 Therefore do not reject that which should not be rejected, and do not desire that which should not have our love. 134 When the real purpose of *tyāg* is missed, then the *tyāg* that is performed

merely becomes a burden so also one who has lost his desires has nothing to do with forbidden actions

*Some wise scholars say that the doing of actions is wrong and therefore should be abandoned others say actions like sacrifices giving of gifts and austerities should not be abandoned*

135 Some cannot resist the desire for the fruit of actions and therefore they call actions injurious just as one who is told he is naked calls others quarrelsome. 136 A gluttonous sick man O Dhananjay (Arjun) blames harmful food and a leper instead of venting his wrath on his own sore skin vents it on the fly 137 So those who are unable to rid themselves of the desire to have the fruit, declare that the action itself is worm-eaten and give out their opinion that all actions should be abandoned 138. There are others who say that actions like sacrifices and so forth must certainly be performed, and that without them there is no way for the purification of the heart. 139 Those who wish quickly to accomplish the purity of their hearts, should not be dilatory in the use of those actions that are powerful in purifying 140 When gold is to be purified one should not neglect the use of fire and for polishing a metal mirror one must collect sufficient material. 141 If one wishes to have clean clothes, one should not consider the washerman's cleansing materials as unclean. 142 Though the performance of actions may be burdensome they should not be abandoned for that reason one cannot get delicious food without the labour of cooking it 143 Through various reasonings, various opinions are held some are for actions, others allow them to be neglected. 144 To end such differences of opinion, and create definite ideas on *tyāg* I shall make a clear explanation.

## 6 Renunciation

*Listen to me attentively Bharatsattam (Arjun) Tyāg O man of might is declared to be of three kinds*

145. 'O Arjun' You must consider *tyāg* to be of three kinds. I shall explain the three in detail 146 Although I am to describe them clearly, still first recognize the one principle underlying them 147 First, therefore, listen to those fixed principles that my omniscient mind firmly holds to 148 So the seeker after final deliverance who is awake to his desire for deliverance, must do this one thing in all its particulars.

*Sacrifices, acts of giving, austerities and such like actions are not to be abandoned, but performed. These sacrifices, gifts and austerities are the purifiers of men*

149. They should no more be abandoned than a traveller can cease to place one foot before the other. 150 Until what is lost is found, its search should not be abandoned, until one is satisfied, one should not push his plate aside 151. As one should not abandon the ferry-boat before reaching the other side, nor cut down the plantain tree before the fruit appears, nor extinguish the lamp until that which was lost has been found, 152. so until one has a clear and fixed understanding of the knowledge of the soul, he should not be apathetic about sacrifices and other actions 153 All the more should you use your right and perform sacrifices, giving of gifts and doing of austerities 154 When a person walks quickly, that very quickness leads to rest, so the excessive performance of actions, helps towards the abandonment of actions 155. In proportion as a man takes medicine with regularity, does he become free from his disease, 156 so when actions are freely and properly done the *raja* and *tama gunas* are swept away 157. By the frequent use of acids, gold is made pure, 158 so when actions are performed with intense devotion, the *raja* and *tama gunas*\* are swept away they appear before the eyes in their pure state 159. So, O Arjun' in seeking for the purity of goodness, the actions used for this purpose reach an equality with the bathing in sacred waters 160 Sacred waters cleanse only

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\* See footnote on verse 64, p 147

the outside, whereas by actions the heart is purified so that good deeds are to be considered as cleansing waters. 161 It is as if a thirsty person in the desert land of Marwād should find a spring of nectar or as if the sun should come to a blind man's eyes 162 or as if to save a drowning man the river itself rushed to save him or as if in falling the ground itself felt pity for him or as if death itself gave length of life to a dying person 163 So it is that those bound by actions are released. Just as a poisoned and dying man is revived by that same poison given in another chemical form 164 so, O Dhananjay (Arjun) by one stroke, actions are the chief means of freeing the man bound by those very actions

## 7 How Actions Are To Be Performed

165 Now Arjun I will tell you clearly how actions destroy the effects of actions. *It is my firm opinion O Pārth that actions are to be performed but with the rejection of any desire for the fruits of those actions* 166. He who performs the great sacrifices without any failures, he feels no pride in so doing 167 One who is paid for going to sacred bathing places, he cannot have the joy of being able to say "I am on pilgrimage 168. An officer who on the strength of the king's seal, arrests another king he cannot have the pride of saying "I have conquered this king" 169 He who floats on the water by holding on to the waist of another he cannot have the pride of being a swimmer; a royal priest cannot have the pride of giving for the king since he gives his patron's wealth. 170 So he who does not pride himself in having performed actions, he so acts that they are properly carried out. 171 For he does not allow his affection O Pandav (Arjun) to go to the fruit of his action. 172. O Dhananjay the moment that the desire for the fruit of one's actions disappears, that moment those actions should be commenced just in the way that a nurse looks on the child of another person. 173 Just as one waters a pīmpal tree without any desire for its fruit, so one should perform one's actions



with no desire for their fruit 174 Just as a herdsman puts aside his desire for milk and herds the village cows, so one must do in reference to the fruit of actions 175. Anyone who acts according to this idea is sure to acquire self-knowledge. 176 Therefore to abandon the desire for the fruit of actions, and drop all association with bodily appetites, this is my good advice. 177. The person who is wearied by the bondage of rebirths, and who is anxious to be free, should not do otherwise than I have described, there is no other way

## 8 Imperfect Self-Denial

*Prescribed actions should not be omitted The abandonment of actions through some other desire is called a 'tāmas' abandonment, i e , marked with evil qualities.*

178 Just as if one should dig his nails in his eyes because he cannot see in the dark, so is he who abandons actions out of dislike for them 179 I call such abandonment of actions as of the *tāmas* quality. It is as though one were angry at his headache and so cut off his head. 180 If a path is difficult, yet one's feet can traverse it Or should one cut off one's feet because of the faults of the road ? 181 When food is placed before a hungry man, whatever failure he may see in it, if he kicks the dish away he will have to fast 182 So the man who is misled by not understanding the *tāmas* quality of wrongly performed actions, must by actions conquer that evil side 183 A man often abandons those actions that naturally come to one in his station in life, but do not thou fall into the error of the *tāmas* quality

*Assuming that actions are a painful burden, he who abandons them through fear of bodily suffering, his action has the 'rājas' quality, and he cannot receive the fruit of that abandoning.*

184 Understanding his duties and knowing the prescribed actions he avoids them because they are difficult 185 The beginnings of many acts are difficult, even the carrying of a lunch bag is at first a burden. 186. Just as at first the

nimb tastes bitter and the myrobalan tastes astringent, so the beginnings of all actions are difficult. 187 A cow may be good but her horns are sharp for hooking the *shevanti* flower is fragrant but it has its thorns a good meal gives joy but there is the burden of cooking it. 188 So finding the beginnings difficult a man wearies over doing them again and again. 189 As a matter of fact he begins the actions because they are prescribed, but when he realizes their difficulties he tosses them away as one does the coals that scorch him. 190 He explains, "It is by my great good fortune that I have obtained this body. Why should I trouble it by doing actions as sinful men do them? 191 Why think of the fruits I *might* get? Is it not better to enjoy those that I *already* possess? 192. From fear therefore, O Arjun of giving his body pain the man drops all actions. Such abandonment has the quality of the *rājas guṇa*. 193 There is here an abandonment of actions, but if it is not joined with the abandonment of the fruits of actions, then it is like what is accidentally spilt over into the fire and is therefore no part of a burnt-offering. 194 If a man is drowned it should not be said that he drowned himself in shallow water in order to have a water burial, for the death was one of misfortune. 195 So he who out of love for his own body drops all actions, he abandons them it is true, but he does not thereby receive the fruit of actions. 196 It happens indeed that when self knowledge dawns, like the sun it dims all the stars at sunrise. 197 so, O Arjun, when actions together with their causes are abandoned the fruit of final deliverance is the result. 198 O Arjun those fruits are unavailable, however for those who abandon action in ignorance; so such abandonment should not be considered as true abandonment.

## 9 True Renunciation And Final Deliverance

199 But through what kind of abandonment the fruit of final deliverance comes unto one's possession will now be told you. Listen!

*Those actions that are not prescribed as duties, O Arjun, when all connection with them is abandoned, together with their fruit, such abandonment is one that has the 'sātvik' (good) quality.*

200. Those actions that come to one naturally because of one's position in life, he performs them in honouring the scriptures which he thus adorns 201 A man must abandon the thought in his mind, "I am the doer," and put away all desire for the fruits of his actions 202 O Arjun, if a mother is paid disrespect, and if she is looked at with lust, both acts become a cause for a fall into hell 203 Both these faults must be rejected, and the mother be honoured just because she is mother Because a cow's mouth is dirty must the whole cow be driven away? 204. Because in our fondest fruit (mango) there is the uneatable skin and core, does anyone reject it for that reason? 205 So to the pride of having performed the acts, and to the desire for the sweet taste of their fruits, the name of "bondage" is given 206. Just as a father does not look at his daughter with a lustful eye, nor feel weariness in caring for her, so it should be in reference to all prescribed duties 207. Such abandonment of actions is like a Wish-Tree, its fruit is final deliverance, and it is known everywhere as good (*sātvik*) abandonment. 208 Just as one burns the seed and so causes the tree to be without a descendant, so he who abandons the fruit of actions, abandons the actions themselves 209 And just as when there is the contact of a touch-stone (*parīs*) with iron, the iron's rust and blackness disappear, so when the actions and their fruits are abandoned, both the *raja* and the *tama* qualities of the man disappear. 210 When by the pure *satva guna* the eyes of self-knowledge are opened, then there happens what takes place with a mirage at eventide 211 Just as space, though infinitely great, cannot be seen, so through the eye of self-knowledge the illusory world is not seen.

## 10 The Wise Are Freed From Doubt

*The wise who are free from doubt and who abandon on the sātviḥ basis they do not hate actions usually hated nor do they become attached to those seeming to be advantageous*

212 Therefore, although there comes to one, through the power of the deeds done in a former birth the pleasant and the unpleasant actions, they can melt away as do the clouds in the sky 213 From his point of view all actions are good, Arjun, and so he is not elated by pleasure or depressed by sorrow 214 To recognize some actions as auspicious to be done with pleasure, and to recognize others as inauspicious and so dislike to do them this is not the good (sātviḥ) tyāg 215 There should be no doubt about the illusory nature of these acts, any more than when a man awakes, he pays no attention to the pleasure or pain he had in his dream. 216 Therefore where there is no idea of an act and its door that, O Arjun is the sātviḥ (good) abandonment. 217 O Parth (Arjun) if actions are abandoned in this way then they are absolutely abandoned but if actions are dropped in any other way they simply increase a man's entanglements.

## 11 The Nature Of True Renunciation

*No man is able to abandon actions completely still he who abandons both actions and the desire for the fruit of those actions is spoken of as one who has abandoned them.*

218 O Arjun, those who after obtaining a human body yet feel a dislike for performing actions, they are like ignorant villagers. 219 What can a jar do by despising clay? What can cloth do by despising the threads that form it? 220 There being heat in fire, will the fire despise the heat? Will a light hate its brightness? 221 Supposing any ill odour is disgusted with its smell where can it get fragrance? How can water exist if it loses its fluidity? 222 So while living in the illusion of possessing a body of what use is the craze of

abandoning actions? 223 Because one applies the fragrant paste to the forehead he can frequently wipe it away, if it appears crooked, but if the forehead itself is crooked can he change it for another? 224 Supposing one pays respect to the actions prescribed in the scriptures, that is no reason for abandoning them How can we separate our body from the works of which it forms a part? 225. The function of breathing goes on even when one is sleeping, and other functions also go on automatically. 226 As the body is the instrument of action, all actions attach themselves to it, and while it is living they cannot be stopped 227. Listen! There is but one way of abandoning actions, viz, while performing prescribed actions, not to be in bondage to the desire for the fruits of actions 228. Offer to God the fruits of your actions and by His grace enlightenment will take place, just as fear disappears by the knowledge that a rope is not a serpent 229. By means of the knowledge of the soul, action along with ignorance is destroyed O Pārth (Arjun), when actions are thus, abandoned, that is true abandonment of actions 230. Therefore anyone performing his actions in this way I consider as one who has abandoned actions, otherwise it would be like regarding a man in a faint as merely resting. 231. So if a man is wearied by certain forms of actions, and desires to get rest from them by performing another type of actions, it would be like adding a blow from the fist to a wound made by the stroke of a club 232 But this explanation is sufficient That man is to be known in the three worlds as one who has truly abandoned actions, who has carried his actions to the point of including the abandonment of the fruit of these actions '

## 12 Three Kinds Of Fruit

*When one who has not abandoned action dies, he receives three kinds of fruits of his actions the undesirable, the desirable and mixture of the two But this does not happen to a true sannyāsī*

233 So, O Arjun, the three forms of fruits of actions have to be experienced by those who do not abandon desires. 234 When a father says at the time of giving his daughter *She is not mine*, he is then free from having to show affection, and it is now for the son in law to fall in the snares of her love. 235 Those who cultivate a field of poisonous plants (poppy and the like), sell the product of the field and live happily on what they gain but those who spend their money in taking that product, they die. 236. So if a man performs the action saying *I am the doer* or if he performs it with the idea "*I am not a doer*" and also abandons the idea of desiring the fruit of the action, the action alone cannot lead to bondage. 237 He who has a desire for the fruit along the highway it is he to whom it is harmful so he who feels the desire for the fruit of his actions he is the one to suffer. 238. He who performs actions but does not desire the fruit of them, he is not overcome by rebirths, because the three worlds are themselves the fruits of actions. 239 God, man and inanimate matter are called the universe, and these forms of actions are the fruits of actions. 240 One is undesirable, one is desirable and one is a mixture of the two. 241 Those who are sensually minded, accordingly engage in forbidden acts. 242. When anyone acquires the body of a worm an insect, or a clod of earth that is an undesirable fruit. 243 But when one pays respect to his authority (the Vedas) and consults it, he performs good deeds. 244 O Arjun, they receive such bodies as Indra and other gods, and that is known popularly as the desirable fruit of actions. 245 But when sweet and sour juices are mixed together a different kind of a juice is formed which overpowers the other two. 246. Just as by the yoga method one of the vital airs becomes static, so by the mixture of the true and false a combined force is formed which conquers the true and the false. 247 So by the performance of the good and the bad in equal proportions a mixed fruit results, namely manhood. 248 So the three forms of the fruit of actions exist in this world, and those who con-

tinue in desiring these fruits of actions never leave the cycle of rebirths. 249. When the tongue becomes gluttonous, eating seems delicious, but the final end is death ( through indigestion ). 250 The friendship of an honest man with a thief is all right so long as they are not alone in a jungle. A prostitute is all right so long as she is not touched 251 So when one performs actions by means of the body, he may attain great prosperity, but at death he immediately experiences the fruits of his actions. 252. Just as a powerful money-lender comes and asks his debtor to pay the promised amount, and will not go away until paid, so anyone must experience the fruits of his actions. 253. A kernel of grain falls from the cob ; after it germinates and grows it produces another cob from which grains again fall, and they again grow 254 While experiencing the fruits of actions, other fruits are ripening, just as in walking one foot advances beyond the other. 255. On which ever side the ferry raft stops, that is its " this side " , so the one who enjoys the fruits of actions never gets to the " other side ". 256. In like manner the experience of results continues through the train of cause and effect, as he who does not abandon actions gets involved in earthly affairs 257 Just as the blossom of the jasmine has the name of wilting immediately, so one who performs no action under the guise of having abandoned actions, it is really as if he had not performed them. 258. If all the grain is used for food, nothing is left for continuing the planting , so by the abandoning of the fruits of actions the actions themselves have their use ended 259. So by the help of pure goodness, and the spray of the *guru's* nectar favour, the prosperity of knowledge drives away the poverty that comes from duality. 260 When the three forms of fruits of actions are destroyed which rise out of the conception of the universe, the idea of an experiencer and a thing to be experienced naturally disappears. 261. So, O hero, one who is a *sannyāsī* of that kind in which knowledge is pre-eminent, he has not the suffering that comes from experiencing the fruits of actions.

262 And when one's eyes see God in one's own soul will those eyes see the works differently? 263 When a wall falls, then the picture sketched on that wall becomes mere dust so when the dawn comes after the night does the darkness remain? 264 Where there is no form, how can a shadow be cast? Where there is no mirror how can one's face find any reflection? 265 Where sleep is finished where is the opportunity for dreams? And who can say that the dreams would be true or false? 266 If the root cause of ignorance does not exist then how can its effect, namely actions, exist? 267 When actions are abandoned will anything be done belonging to action? But when ignorance exists in anyone, 268 through the influence of the idea "I am the doer" the soul rushes into doing actions both good and bad, and the sight is fixed on the idea of duality 269 Then O Arjun the soul is as separate from actions as the West is from the East 270 just as space is separate from a cloud as the sun from a mirage, and the earth from air 271 When the water of a river covers a rock still the sand remains in the river and you can readily see the difference between the two. 272 Although the moss may be near the water it is very different from the water and because the lamp-black is near the lamp, can it be called a lamp? 273 Though the moon has black spots they and the moon are not the same so the physical eye and sight are not the same 274 just as there is a difference between the road and the one walking on it, between the water of a river and the river bed, between a mirror and the face that looks into it. 275 In that very proportion the actions are different from the soul, but through ignorance both seem alike 276. The lotus by blossoming out suggests that the sun has risen, and it causes the bees to enjoy its honey but why not think of the lotus as rather formed from the lake?



### 13. Five Causes Of The Acts Of The Soul

'O Mighty One' I am going to describe to you the five causes which are required for performing the actions according to the declaration of the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy.

277 'Again and again I have told you, O mighty Arjun, that the acts of the soul have a cause outside of itself. I will describe five causes. 278 Perhaps you already know these five causes which the scriptures with hands uplifted (openly) have described. 279 In King Veda's capital, the palace of the *Veda Sāṅkhya*, that philosophy is being proclaimed with the accompanying sound of drums, 280 that in all the world the accomplishment of all actions is founded on that principle, and one should not place the King *Ātmā* (soul) as the intervening cause. 281. O Arjun! through that proclamation it has become public knowledge, so let it lodge itself in your ear. 282. And why have the burden of listening from others' lips, when that jewel of knowledge, is already in your hand? 283 When a mirror is placed before one, why should one request another to tell him how he looks? 284 Wherever a *bhaktā* looks, there he sees Me, and I have as it were your plaything. 285. Thus while God was speaking by the swift flow of His love, He was lost in thought. Meanwhile the other (Arjun) was simply carried away by his joy. 286. Just as when the light of the full moon falls on the *Soma-kānt* jewel-mountain, the mountain may wish to melt away and become a lake, 287. so the wall of happiness and of its experience was broken down, and joy itself took the form of Arjun. 288. Then the Almighty God had time to come to Himself, and from His heart He rushed to the help of the one who was drowning in his joy. 289 Great as Arjun was, he was drowning along with his knowledge, so great was the tide of his joy. So drawing him out, 290. God said to him, 'O Arjun! Come back to your right mind.' Arjun then drew a long breath and

vagged his head 291 and said, 'You know' O Giver of good that being disgusted by my efforts even to approach Your personality (in a state of duality) I was looking to see whether I could enter into oneness with You. 292. If You truly have love for me, why do You put anything in the way of it (by the state of birth)? 293 Here Śhrī Krishna replied

How is it that you do not yet know you foolish fellow that the moon and the moonlight are never separated? 294 And I am fearful about expressing my feelings, because sulking only increases the love, and so our love gets stronger 295 Since we have our individual characteristics we can live as we are doing So no more of this discussion on absorption 296. Now what were we saying about the difference between actions and the soul O Arjun? 297 Arjun replied God was telling me what I naturally had in mind regarding this subject. 298 But You promised to tell me the five causes which are the causes of all actions. 299 And also to tell me further regarding my favourite subject that there is in this no connection with the soul 300 In reply to this the Lord of the universe said I am very pleased, for there is no one your equal in persisting for an answer 301 But I will explain them to you, Arjun, in easy mystic language, though it makes me a debtor to your love. 302 Arjun then replied

God has evidently forgotten His former promise, for why are you still keeping to the subject of I and Thou? 303 Here Śhrī Krishna said, Is that so? Well now give good attention and listen. 304 Now Arjun it is true that the causes of actions are quite outside the 'five causes. 305 But by the combination of these "five causes" the purpose for which actions are started numbers five. 306 Now the soul as a substance is neither the material nor the subjective cause, nor does it take to itself the completing of actions. 307 The good and the bad originate in the same way as the night and the day originate in the sky (the sky not being a cause) 308 Water heat and vapour, when in contact with the air,

form clouds in the sky, but the sky itself knows nothing about it. 309 A boat is built of many pieces of wood; the boatman pushes it into the stream, and the wind drives it along; the water is only the witness of this deed 310 A potter puts a ball of mud on the wheel, and whirling it with his stick a vessel is formed 311. Now think Aside from being the mere material from which the vessel is made, what part does it play? 312 Well, while men are performing their daily toil, what of all their action which is directly caused by the sun? 313. So by the union of the five causes, the planting of the action-vine takes place, but the *ātmā* ( soul ) is separate from this '

#### 14. The Body, The Doer And The Deed, The Functions And The Deities

314. ' Now just as pearls are weighed so I shall explain each of the five causes

*' The Body, the Doer and the Deed, the Functions of the separate sense-organs, and the Deities presiding over the senses, these are the five causes.'*

315. ' Now listen to their characteristics. My assertion is that the body stands *first* as a causer of actions. 316 The body is called *adhishtān* ( the place ) because the experiencer of joys and sorrows resides here with them. 317 The joys and sorrows are by one's nature connected with the body through the functions of the ten sense organs 318 A person has no other place for their experience, and therefore the body is called *adhishtān* ( place of experience ) 319 The family of the twenty-four elements ' have their home here, and it is here that deliverance and the bonds of bondage reside. 320 Moreover, O Dhananjay, where the three conditions exist ( waking, sleep and dreamless sleep ), there the body gets its name of *adhishtān*. 321. The doer is the *second* cause

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\* For the ' 24 elements ' see *Poet Saints* vol 10, *Stories Of Indian Saints*, vol. 1, p 445.

of actions, and is called the reflection of life. 322. In the same way the skies rain down water and form pools in the earth there its form is reflected. 323 When overcome with sleep, a king does not know himself and in his dreams he thinks himself as being on the level of a subject. 324 So forgetting itself life thinks itself in the form of the body. 325 Life when it forgets its true self is called soul and that soul has promised to the body to be connected with it. 326. When nature does an act the soul mistakingly says "I did it and it is this doer that is called the soul. 327 Through the hairs of the eyelids, there is one sight but to one looking at the eye it seems divided like the hairs in a whisk broom. 328 A single light shines through the many openings in the wall so it looks as if many lights were shining. 329 or 330\* The one knowledge of the intelligence is differently seen through the different organs of sense such as the ear and others. 330 or 331\* These differing forms of organs that give knowledge are the *third* cause of actions, O Nripamandan! 331 or 332\* Streams coming from East and West unite into one flowing river and as such and in small and great rivers alike they flow into the one ocean. 332 or 329\* When a man in a drama assumes many guises, he seems to be so many different persons. 333 So that vital imperishable air which has the power to produce action when it functions in different places in the body is known by different names. 334 When it operates in the voice it is called speech when in the hand it is the operation of giving and receiving. 335 When it operates in the feet it is the act of walking when in the two bodily openings it is the cleansing operation. 336 From the naval to the heart is the location of the vital air and that is called the "life" (*prāṇ*) 337 And further up in the breathing that same power is called *udān* (or vocalization) 338 The gas issuing from the lower opening is *apān* and as the air per

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Avate & the Bankatrwamī's texts differ from Sākhare's text in the order of verses 329 to 332.

vading the whole body it is called *vjān* (vital air) 339. Through food the whole body is equally filled with all its various liquids, all the joints are supplied, not omitting one. 340. And after these regular functions, O Kīriti, it is called *samān* (equally distributed) 341. And when the power acts in yawning, sneezing, etc., it is called serpent, tortoise, *et cetera*. 342. But, O Arjun, though these are the actions of a single vital air, its name changes according to its varying functions. 343. And when the powers of the vital air are considered separately according to its functions, they form the *fourth* cause of actions. 344. Of all the seasons the autumn is the best, and in the autumn it is the moonlight nights that are the best, because of the relation of the full moonlight to the ordinary moonlight. 345. In the springtime a garden is a delight, and in the garden we meet with those who are dear to us, and in that meeting happy opportunities occur. 346. And, O Arjun, when the various lotus flowers open, at the time of opening the honey is the best. 347. In forms of speech, poetry is the best; in poetry, that is best which has the most pleasing words, and in the most pleasing that which has the touch of the supreme spiritual riches. 348. So in the glory of all these functionings it is the mind alone that is the best, and the mind is an organ superior to the other nine. 349. And just as deities preside over the locations of the different functions, so in the place of honour among the sense-organs stands the pure mind. 350. Therefore over the ten sense-organs such as the eye and so forth, there are various deities such as the sun and others. 351. So Arjun,' God said, 'this collection of presiding deities makes the *fifth* cause for actions. 352. So now I have made you understand the storehouse from which these action-producing causes are derived.'

## 15. Five Forces Underlying Men's Actions

353. 'And now I shall open up to you the five underlying forces that enlarge the storehouse of these causes, and give universality to actions.

*The actions which men perform through their bodies, their speech and their minds whether they be right or wrong have five underlying forces*

354 When the springtime suddenly comes it is the force that produces the new leaves the leaves then blossom into flowers and the flowers into fruit. 355 The rainy season brings the clouds, the clouds bring the fall of rain, and by the rain there comes the joy of garnered grain. 356. The East brings forth the dawn the dawn the rising of the sun and when the sun looks over all the day has begun. 357 So, O Arjun, the mind is the cause of the determination to perform actions, and that determination kindles the lamp of speech. 358 Then that lamp of speech shows the way to every class of deeds, and then the doer begins to perform his deeds. 359 The group of the physical sense organs becomes the cause of physical acts, just as any work in iron has to be done with iron tools. 360 When the warp is placed within the web, the fibre-threads become cloth. 361 Just as a jewel has to be used in cutting a jewel so the mind is the cause of the actions of the human body. 362. If anyone raises the question how can the cause of bodily action be its own cause, then kindly listen. 363 Just as the sun is the prime and secondary cause of the sunlight or as the joints of the sugar-cane are the prime cause of the growing of the sugar-cane. 364 just as when the goddess of speech is to be praised it is speech that has to be employed or if the Vedas are to be praised it must be done by the Vedas themselves. 365. as every one knows that the body and its sense organs are the causes of actions, but these causes cannot fail to have their prime causes, that is evident. 366. And in these bodily causes the group of body and sense organs is the prime cause for the appearance of the whole class of actions. 367 If one pays respect to the scriptures, and follows their path then O Dhananjay what is right becomes the prime cause of the right.

368. Perhaps the field ridges will hold the rush of rain water in the rice fields, yet if it sinks it will be of wonderful use. 369. If a man leaves his home in an angry mood and happens to walk towards Dwārkā, he may weary but his foot-steps will not be in vain. 370 So, when actions are blindly done by the group of prime and secondary causes, if they follow the light of the scriptures, those deeds must be called right. 371. When heated milk rises to the brim and naturally is over-boiled, it is spent but not spent in a proper cause 372. If acts are done without the help of the scriptures, they are no more right acts, than money stolen is to be considered as a gift 373 O Arjun, what *mantra* is there outside the fifty-two letters of the alphabet? Is there a person who cannot pronounce even a single one? 374 But, O Arjun, if the *mantra* of the alphabetical letters is unknown, one will not receive the fruit of pronouncing them in words 375 So when through the prime and secondary causes, irregular actions take place, when they are not in accordance with scriptures, 376. they are actions, but indeed they are causes of sinful actions.'

## 16. The Soul As A Cause Of Action

*These things being so, he who looks on his 'ātmā' (soul) as being the doer, he is a doer from the point of view of one whose mind is refined, but with a wrong conception*

377 'Thus, O Arjun, these five secondary causes of actions, have five primary causes. Now see whether you can find the *ātmā* here as a cause. 378 The sun does not itself assume any form, but it gives light to the objects of the eye, so the *ātmā* (soul) without being actions throws light upon them 379 O Arjun, the beholder does not become either the reflection or the mirror, but he throws his light on both 380 As the sun is neither day nor night, O Son of Pandu, so the *ātmā* (soul) without being either action or the doer of it, manifests itself 381. He whose mind, through the misconception that the body is the "I," confuses itself as being body, his knowledge

of the *ātmā* is in midnight darkness. 382. He who considers that the supreme limit of the soul God and *Brahma* is in bodily form his natural conviction is "I am the doer" 383. He whose perfect conviction is not that the *ātmā* is the doer of actions, he will regard the body as the doer of actions 384. For that "I" the *ātmā* which is beyond all actions and the witnesser of all actions his ears have never so much as heard. 385. Therefore likening the *ātmā* to the body and measuring it by the body is nothing remarkable. Does not the owl turn the day into night (by closing its eyes)? 386. Would not a man, who had never seen the true sun in the heavens, think that its reflection in the pool of water was the sun? 387. Because of the watery nature of the pool he thinks the sun has been brought there when the pool is emptied he thinks the sun has been destroyed when the water trembles he thinks the sun trembles. 388. So long as a sleeper is not awakened he thinks his dream true. What wonder then that a man should take a rope for a snake and be afraid? 389. So long as the eye is suffering from jaundice the moon looks yellow. Is it not natural then that a deer should be deceived by a mirage? 390. So he who will not let so much as the name of the *śāstras* or a *guru* reach his borders, lives in foolishness. 391. So by his looking at the body as *ātmā* he puts the *ātmā* into a snare just as a fox regards the swift motion of the clouds as the swift motion of the moon. 392. O Arjun by the conception that he is he a man becomes bound by strong fetters in the prison house of the body. 393. Obsessed by the idea that he is fastened the poor parrot sits on his perch and though his feet are free he does not let go the perch. 394. So he who attributes to the pure *ātmā* that it is not the *ātmā* but the body that does the actions he becomes caught for millions of ages in the snare of actions. 395. Now he who is in the midst of actions, but is not touched by the actions, he is just like the internal fire of the ocean that does not touch the water of the ocean. 396. And now I will



368. Perhaps the field ridges will hold the rush of rain water in the rice fields, yet if it sinks it will be of wonderful use. 369. If a man leaves his home in an angry mood and happens to walk towards Dwārkā, he may weary but his footsteps will not be in vain. 370. So, when actions are blindly done by the group of prime and secondary causes, if they follow the light of the scriptures, those deeds must be called right. 371. When heated milk rises to the brim and naturally is over-boiled, it is spent but not spent in a proper cause. 372. If acts are done without the help of the scriptures, they are no more right acts, than money stolen is to be considered as a gift. 373 O Arjun, what *mantra* is there outside the fifty-two letters of the alphabet? Is there a person who cannot pronounce even a single one? 374 But, O Arjun, if the *mantra* of the alphabetical letters is unknown, one will not receive the fruit of pronouncing them in words. 375 So when through the prime and secondary causes, irregular actions take place, when they are not in accordance with scriptures, 376 they are actions, but indeed they are causes of sinful actions.'

## 16. The Soul As A Cause Of Action

*These things being so, he who looks on his 'ātmanā' (soul) as being the doer, he is a doer from the point of view of one whose mind is refined, but with a wrong conception*

377. 'Thus, O Arjun, these five secondary causes of actions, have five primary causes. Now see whether you can find the *ātmanā* here as a cause. 378 The sun does not itself assume any form, but it gives light to the objects of the eye, so the *ātmanā* (soul) without being actions throws light upon them. 379 O Arjun, the beholder does not become either the reflection or the mirror, but he throws his light on both. 380. As the sun is neither day nor night, O Son of Pandu, so the *ātmanā* (soul) without being either action or the doer of it, manifests itself. 381 He whose mind, through the misconception that the body is the "I," confuses itself as being body, his knowledge

of the *ātmā* is in midnight darkness. 382. He who considers that the supreme limit of the soul God and *Brahma* is in bodily form his natural conviction is "I am the doer" 383 He whose perfect conviction is not that the *ātmā* is the doer of actions, he will regard the body as the doer of actions 384 For that "I" the *ātmā* which is beyond all actions and the witnesser of all actions his ears have never so much as heard. 385 Therefore likening the *ātmā* to the body and measuring it by the body is nothing remarkable. Does not the owl turn the day into night (by closing its eyes)? 386 Would not a man, who had never seen the true sun in the heavens, think that its reflection in the pool of water was the sun? 387 Because of the watery nature of the pool he thinks the sun has been brought there when the pool is emptied he thinks the sun has been destroyed when the water trembles he thinks the sun trembles. 388 So long as a sleeper is not awakened he thinks his dream true. What wonder then that a man should take a rope for a snake and be afraid? 389 So long as the eye is suffering from jaundice the moon looks yellow Is it not natural then that a deer should be deceived by a mirage? 390 So he who will not let so much as the name of the *śāstras* or a *guru* reach his borders, lives in foolishness. 391 So by his looking at the body as *ātmā* he puts the *ātmā* into a snare just as a fox regards the swift motion of the clouds as the swift motion of the moon 392 O Arjun by the conception that he is he a man becomes bound by strong fetters in the prison house of the body 393 Obsessed by the idea that he is fastened the poor parrot sits on his perch and though his feet are free he does not let go the perch 394 So he who attributes to the pure *ātmā* that it is not the *ātmā* but the body that does the actions he becomes caught for millions of ages in the snare of actions 395 Now he who is in the midst of actions, but is not touched by the actions, he is just like the internal fire of the ocean that does not touch the water of the ocean. 396. And now I will

tell you how to recognize one whose deeds are done with the idea of *ātmanā* and body being separate. 397. By watching those who have become free, a man gains his own freedom (from rebirths), just as when looking with the aid of a light an object is seen. 398. When a mirror is being cleansed, self meets self; just as when salt comes in contact with water it becomes water. 399. When on the contrary the reflection looks at the face, its power of sight has naturally disappeared, and there remains merely the reflection. 400. Therefore, since the lost self is to be found in looking at saints, one should constantly be engaged in singing their praises and listening to them. 401. So while one is in the midst of actions through actions, and is not influenced by the good or evil, he is like the eye that is not affected by the skin of the eye'

## 17 One Described Who Is Free From Bondage

*One who has not the feeling of 'I am the doer' is not affected by his deeds. Though he might kill every one in this world, still, since it is not he who kills, he is not affected by it*

402. 'So now with arms of description uplifted, look to the form of one who has been freed from his bondage. 403. O ever-wakeful Arjun, he who was in the sleep of ignorance was engaged in a dream of being the universe from eternity. 404. By the pronouncing of the great sentence (*tat tvam asi*, i. e., Thou art That = Brahma), and by the power of a *guru's* favour, he is not like one on whose head the *guru's* hand has been placed, but like one who has been slapped to awaken him. 405. O Arjun, the awakening from the illusion of the dream of being the universe, and from the sleep of ignorance, is a natural awakening which arises from the joy of realizing his non-duality. 406. Just as when the moon's rays are spread out, the flood of mirage water that is overflowing everywhere disappears. 407. Just as when childhood's days are gone, there is no more fear of ghosts, and when firewood is burned, it is

no longer firewood. 408 And just as when a person awakes the vision of his dream is no longer seen, so, O Arjun the conception of "I and mine" disappears. 409 If the sun while looking for darkness, hunts for it in some cellar or cave, the darkness will not remain there. 410 So anyone who is circumscribed by his own conception of being *ātma* will see all visible things in the form of *ātmā*. 411 Just as the thing that gets on fire, and the difference between the burner and the thing burned ceases to be, 412. so, supposing duality to exist in the performance of an action, whatever remains as the cause, after the claim ceases that the *ātmā* is the doer. 413 Will the human lord of the *ātma*-conception regard the physical conception as anything? Does the water of the final deluge take any notice of little streams? 414 Son of Pandu! can this conception "I am Brahman" be attained by calling the body "I"? No! no more than a man's own reflection can be grasped. 415 After churning cream and taking out the butter can the butter be put back into the buttermilk with its quality of non-assimilation? 416. O hero, can fire be separated from pieces of wood (by friction) and again be confined in a wooden box? 417 When the sun comes out of the womb of the night, has he ever so much as heard of there being night? 418 Similarly he who has overcome the idea of the thing known and the knower how can he have the pride of thinking "I am my body"? 419 Wherever space goes it finds it filled with itself pervading everywhere. 420 In the same way what one does *is himself by its very nature then what kind of an action can it be that makes one the doer of it?* 421 Just as there is no place without the sky just as the ocean has no flow just as the polar star cannot move so it happens to that person. 422. Though a man who has the feeling "I am the doer" may become useless, still as long as the body functions there must be actions. 423 Though the wind suddenly stops, the trees still sway and though the camphor is exhausted its fragrance still remains. 424 When a musical concert is over

there still remains in the mind the pleasure caused by the music, and when the rain that moistened the earth has ceased, the moisture still remains. 425. O Arjun, after the sun has set, the sun's light is still seen in the evening twilight. 426 Though an arrow aimed at the target is let off, it still retains its momentum. 427. When a potter removes the finished vessel from the whirling wheel, the wheel continues to whirl through the motion the potter gave it. 428 So, O Dhananjay, when the pride of "My body is the doer" has gone, by its very nature it still provokes actions. 429. Dreams appear without any determination to have them, and wild trees grow in a forest without being planted, and aerial appearances of earthly objects are produced without anyone's effort. 430. So without the determination of the *ātmanā*, the five bodily causes of actions become the cause of action. 431. On account of the effects of deeds done in a former birth, the five secondary causes and the primary causes cause many actions. 432 It matters not whether in these acts the destruction of the world takes place, or whether a new world is created, 433. just as the sun does not know how the moon-lotus withers and how the sun-lotus blossoms. 434 Even though the lightning falling from the sky may shatter the ground to pieces, and though the genial showers make the fresh green grass, 435. yet as the sky knows nothing of these two facts, so that man knows nothing of the acts of the body who looking from the point of view of one unconscious of body, lives in the body. 436. In these acts of the body there may be the creation or destruction of the universe, but the *ātmanā* does not know it, just as the awakened man sees no longer the visions of his dream. 437. And on the contrary they who look at the one possessing the body with the natural eye, consider him as the doer. 438. Does not a fox regard the straw scare-crow placed on the border of the field as a real protector? 439. Just as men have to observe whether a crazy man is clothed or naked and have to count the wounds of those fallen in battle; 440. and just as people

see the *sasī* (wife offering herself on the pyre) making her preparations, but she herself notices neither the fire, the people nor her own body 441 so when the consciousness of being *ātmā* drives away the distinction of the one looking and the object to be seen, the *ātmā* does not know what the group of sense-organs have done. 442 Although the people on the seashore may consider that the big waves swallow the little waves, 443 yet from the point of view of the water no wave has swallowed the others so to the one who knows no duality there is nothing which can destroy 444 The golden image of the goddess, may destroy the golden image of the demon Mahish by the golden three-pointed spear 445 and this may seem to be true from the point of view of the *bhaktā* but from the point of view of the gold these three (the goddess, the spear the demon Mahish) are nothing but gold. 446. A painting of water and of fire is for the eye only to admire, but when a piece of cloth is applied to them, they neither moisten nor burn it. 447 In the same way the body of one who has attained final deliverance goes on acting through the consequence of actions in a former birth, and idiotic people when seeing these actions say that the body is the doer 448. Even if in the doing of those acts the destruction of all the three worlds should take place, yet he should not be said to be the doer 449 How can it be said that light destroys darkness, if the light is said to be groping in darkness? So also to one who has gained the true wisdom there is no other whom he can destroy 450 His mind cannot conceive of even so much as the odour of sin and goodness, for no stream remains a polluted stream after it joins the Ganges. 451 O Dhananjay when fire strives with fire does the one scorch the other? Or does a sword thrust its point into itself? 452. So he who does not regard any kind of acts as different from himself what is there that can have any effect on him? 453 Therefore when effect, doer and the act of doing are in the one form of the *ātmā*, he is without bondage to the body and its sense

organs. 454. The doer very cleverly ploughs out the five causes of bodily action by means of the ten ploughs, the sense-organs 455 And acting either justly or unjustly by these two means he immediately plants them ( the five primary causes ) in his action-garden 456. In this great work the *ātmā* is not the helper, nor should you say he is the beginner of it. 457 The *ātmā* is the witnesser, and when the will determines to do an action, would the *ātmā* then give it the instructions what to do? 458 So that the efforts which people laboriously make, they do not affect the *ātmā* 459 Therefore he who realises his pure *ātmā*-nature is no longer in the prison-house of actions'

## 18 Knowledge, Knower And The Thing Known

*Knowledge, knower and the object to be known, these three elements are the directing force behind actions. The act of doing, the thing to be done, and the doer, these three elements form the group of action-elements.*

460. ' On the canvas of ignorance the picture of knowledge is well known to consist of three elements ( the cloth, the painter and the picture ). 461 Knowledge, knower, the thing to be known are the three original causes of the world. And from them originate actions 462 Now, O Dhananjay, listen to my description of each of these three. 463. The light of the sun in the form of the *ātmā*, by means of its rays in the form of organs of knowledge, and of the five primary causes, fall on the lotus in the form of their object, and that makes it blossom. 464. The *ātmā* as a king riding on a horse without saddle, by means of his weapons brings back the loot from the country of objects of sense. 465. The being that experiences joy and sorrow through the workings of the sense organs, and whose knowledge vanishes in dreamless sleep, 466 that being is called the knower, O Son of Pandu, and that which I have told you is knowledge. 467. That which is born of ignorance, immediately after its birth, O Kṛitī, divides into its three elements 468. And in its onward motion it places before itself the rock

of the thing to be known and behind it the knowing 469 Then comes knowledge which stands between the knower and the object of knowledge 470 And when the knowledge reaches the limit of the object of knowledge, knowledge gives the name to all things. 471 This knowledge is called the common knowledge, there is no question about this And now listen to the characteristics of the object of knowledge. 472. The object of knowledge is characterized by the five elemental forms sound touch, form taste and smell 473 for example, when a mango is seen, what affects the five senses, through its colour on the eye, its juice on the tongue, odour on the nostril the sound of its name on the ear and its form to the touch? 474 The object to be known is but single, but the knowledge of it through the sense organs leads to these five divisions of knowledge. 475 When the stream reaches the ocean its flow ceases. When a traveller reaches his destination his walking ceases When a field is ripe the growing ceases. 476. And where knowledge rushes on the path taken by the sense organs and stops there, that O Kintī is called the object of knowledge. 477 Thus, O Dhananjay I have explained to you the cause of *karma* namely the knower the knowing and the object to be known. 478 Of the five forms in which the object of knowledge can be known, namely sound, etc., whether pleasant or unpleasant, there must be at least one of them. 479 And the moment that knowledge begins to show to the knower the object to be known, O Dhananjay he is ready to accept it or reject it. 480 Just as a crane is ready to catch the fish it sees, as a poor man might rush to a pile of money or as a lustful man might act when he sees a woman 481 as water rushes down an incline, as the bee is attracted by the fragrance of the flower as the calf runs to its mother at the milking hour 482 or as when after men have heard the description of the maidens in heaven they start sacrifices that reach unto heaven 483 or O Kintī, just as when a pigeon in the very bosom of the sky sees its female mate, it dashes down to her 484 and



as when the clouds thunder, at once the peacock would fly into the sky, so whenever the knower sees the object to be known he rushes towards it in the same way. 485. Therefore, O Son of Pandu, these three, knower, knowing, and object to be known, are thus the causes of all actions 486. And if the object to be known should perhaps be a thing he is fond of, he cannot bear a moment's delay in enjoying it 487. But should that object be contrary to his wish, every moment it takes to discard it seems an age 488. A man mistakes a snake for a garland of jewels, and then at once he feels joy instead of fear, but when he touches it and finds it a serpent he is full of fear. 489. Such is the state of mind of the knower when he sees a pleasing or displeasing object. Then by accepting or rejecting it, actions take place, 490. just as a lover of boxing, although a general in the army, will leave his chariot and walk on foot to go and watch it. 491. When a knower, by reason of his knowing, reaches that state when he deems himself the doer, he is like the man who sits down to a meal, and then has to go and cook it 492. Or as if a bee should plant a garden (so as to grow flowers), or as if a tester of metal should become the metal itself, or as if God were to come and build His own temple, 493 so when by the love of an object, O Pāṇḍav, the knower allows the sense organs to function, he becomes a doer 494. And so when he, the doer, uses knowledge as his means, the object to be known naturally becomes action. 495. Thus O wise Arjun, the knowledge with its group of three is changed, as at night the eye changes its beauty 496. Or as when fate is against a man it changes the luxurious living of the rich, or as the moon, after the full moon, changes through its various phases, 497 so when the knower moves the sense organs to action he becomes involved in them as a doer. Listen now to the characteristics of such a doer 498. His heart has four characteristics, viz., intellect (*buddhi*, the discriminating faculty), the thinking organ (*man*), will (*chit*) and conscious feeling (*ahankār*) 499. The

five sense organs are the outside skin the ear, the eye, the tongue and the nose. 500 Then the inner organ with the consciousness of doer doing and object weighs the effect of action and if it thinks the effect will be a happy one, 501 then the ten outer organs the eyes and so forth, start at once to function 502 The group of ten sense organs are made to function until the fruits of the actions come to hand. 503 But if 't sees that the result of action will be an unhappy one then it uses these ten organs for the rejecting of the fruit 504 until sorrow leaves its place, just as a king makes his officers work day and night to collect his revenues. 505 And so in putting himself to the yoke of the senses, the knower becomes the doer as he is described. 506. As in all the actions which the doer undertakes, we call these sense organs the means for actions, just as a farmer uses his plough 507 And in accomplishing this the actions which the doer has to use are called here in this life *karma* 508. Just as the mind of the sonar (or the goldsmith) pervades the ornament as the moon pervades the moonbeams, as expansion pervades the spreading vine 509 or as the sun pervades the light as the sugar cane juice pervades the sweetness, as the sky is pervaded by space 510 so also that which pervades the actions resulting from doing is called *karma* O Dhananjay 511 I have described to you, O wonderful head jewel, Arjun, the doer the thing done (*karma*) and the doing of it 512 So here we see the knower the knowing and the thing known as the three instigators of *karma* and also that the three, namely the doer the doing and the thing done are the *karma* in its collected form 513 And just as smoke is in fire, and as a tree is placed in its seed and as the mind is always connected with desire 514 so the doer the doing and the thing done, these three are the very life of *karma* just as gold is the very life of the gold mine. 515 So, O Son of Pandu, when one is in such a state of mind that he says, "I am the doer of actions," the *ātmā* is far distant from the actions. 516. But why should I again and again remind you

that the *ātma* is separate from deeds ? You know this already,  
O wise Arjun'

## 19. Knowledge, 'Karma' And Doer Have Each A Threefold Division

*I have told you of knowledge, 'karma' and the doer according to differences caused by the three 'gunas', as set forth in the Sāṅkhya philosophy. Now listen to these three according to their three 'gunas'*

517 Now these three, knowledge, *karma* and doer which I have mentioned, are different from one another according to their *gunas* 518 Dhananjay, do not trust to knowledge, *karma* and doer, because the two *gunas* (*raja* and *tama*) place one in bondage, and the only one which has the power to deliver is the *satva guna* 519 Now in order that you may understand the *sātvik guna* I will explain it as it has been clearly set forth in the Sāṅkhya philosophy 520 That philosophy is the milk-ocean of thought, the moon of the lotus-flower of self-knowledge, and the same Sāṅkhya philosophy is overlord of all *śāstras* which open the eye to knowledge 521. This philosophy is a sun that separates the impersonal and the personal, as it does the mixture of day and night in the three worlds 522 This Sāṅkhya philosophy, which duly weighs the twenty-four elements of this worldly life with its desires, take thou and enjoy 523 O Arjun, the following is the Sāṅkhya description of the three *gunas* 524 These *gunas* by their own power put the stamp of their three characteristics on all visible objects. 525 Such is the great might of the three *gunas* (*satva*, *raja* and *tama*) that they divide into three classes everything from the primal Brahma to the worm. 526 But first I am going to tell you of the knowledge that embraces the whole mass of the universe as divided according to the divisions caused by the differences of the *gunas*. 527. For if the sight is clear, all things are seen clearly, so if a clear knowledge is obtained everything becomes plain 528. Now I will tell you of the *sātvik* knowledge, influenced

by the *satva guna* Give attention. So said the mine of eternal goodness, Shri Krishna.

## 20 The Knowledge Which Is Called Sātvik Guna

*That knowledge by which in the various objects of nature the one undivided imperishable nature is seen that knowledge is called sātvik guna*

529 So Arjun that knowledge is *sātvik* which in its rise removes the objects to be known as well as the knower 530 As the sun cannot see the darkness, as the ocean knows nothing of rivers, or as one cannot seize his own shadow by putting his arms around it, 531 so the knowledge that sees no difference between objects, from final emancipation to a blade of grass 532 is like one looking at a painted wall that has been plastered over or as salt looks after being washed or as happens to a dream when the dreamer is awake 533 a knowledge that when it looks towards the object of knowledge, nothing remains of knower knowing or object known. 534 Just as an expert testing an ornament does not have to melt the gold down and as one does not have to sift out the waves in order to get water 535 so that knowledge is called *satvik* that can see no differences in the visible things. 536 Just as when a person looks into a mirror he sees his own image, so this knowledge when looking at objects of knowledge, sees not them but itself 537 This is a sufficient explanation of the knowledge that is the home of the glorious final deliverance. Now let us turn to the characteristic of the *rājas* knowledge.

## 21 The Meaning Of Rājas Knowledge

*The knowledge that perceives in the non-dual atmā that created things consist of many different elements that knowledge is called rajas knowledge*

538 O Parth, listen! That knowledge is of the *rājas* kind that depends upon the idea of differences. 539 That knowledge which attributes variety in the natural world, and thereby has made the knower divisible, has brought much

illusion to the knower. 540 Just as sleep brings before actual forms the screen of ignorance and thereby brings about the repeated terrors of dreams, 541 so ignorance, placing around the house of self-knowledge the snares of illusion, by the action of the three (wakefulness, sleep and dreamless sleep) deceives the knower 542. Just as to a child the gold in an ornament is of no value, so is that which drives far off the idea of non duality through names and forms 543. When to a foolish man an earthen vessel and jars are shown, he thinks of the form, not of the clay from which it is made, and when he sees a light he does not think of the fire that gives the light, 544 or when a cloth is presented to a fool he does not think of the threads that compose it, for most fools think nothing of the canvas upon which the picture is painted, 545 so through the idea that there is variety in nature, the knowledge of the unity of all things is destroyed 546 When fire is seen to be of different forms according to the wood that is burning, or as fragrance comes differently from different flowers, or as by the ripples in the water the moon seems divided into separate pieces, 547 so the knowledge that is pervaded by the idea that by their appearance the variety seen in matter is small or large, that knowledge is of the *īājās* kind'

## 22 The Knowledge Called 'Tāmas Guna'

*The knowledge that in one effect, complete in itself, the unconnected and without cause, is small like matter outside of the one substantive element, that knowledge is called the 'tāmas guna'*

548 'Now I shall tell you of the characteristics of the *tāmas guna* Carefully consider this, just as one would very carefully note a Māng's hut when it is pointed out 549. Therefore, O Kīrītī, the knowledge that wanders about without the garment of the scriptures, the Vedas turn their backs upon it, saying it is wandering unclad 550 Upon it the other scriptures have also placed their ban, lest they themselves should be defiled, and they have sent it off to the mountainous

region of foreign religions 551 A knowledge possessed by the demon of the *tāmas* *guna* takes to itself the character of one who is crazy 552 The crazy know nothing of moral problems about the body they know nothing of forbidden food they are like dogs let loose in a deserted village. 553 That which they find hard to swallow or that which when eaten sets the tongue on fire, that they reject the rest they take. 554 When a rat steals some gold ornament it pays no attention to the question whether it is good or bad. An eater of meat cares not whether the meat is dark or white. 555 In a forest a fire gives no thought to what it is burning and a fly sits on a dead or a live being without giving any thought 556. A crow takes no thought as to whether the food he eats is what has been vomitted or what has been properly served, or whether it is fresh or whether decayed. 557 So *tamas* knowledge does not include in its object the rejecting of forbidden things and the reverent acceptance of the prescribed things 558. it accepts anything as its object for enjoyment and distributes it, e. g. money to feed the stomach and lust to ill use a woman 559 it does not recognize the difference between waters that are holy for bathing in and those which are not holy but looks on water only as giving the joy that removes thirst. 560 In the same way dis regarding what is lawful to eat and what is not, and what is worthy of contempt and what is not, it considers whatever one likes as proper to eat. 561 It looks on all womankind as simply objects for sexual enjoyment, and is ever ready to approach them 562. *Tāmas* knowledge gives the name of relative to those who are useful to one, mere blood relatives being of no consequence. 563 Death thinks everything to be its food fire thinks everything is wood and this *tāmas* knowledge thinks the whole world is its property 564 So *tāmas* knowledge thinks the whole world is only for its enjoyment, and has but one expected fruit that of bodily provision 565 as the rain falls from the sky has but one place

for it to lie, so this knowledge regards every act as something for the stomach 566. That heaven and hell have their causes in moral and immoral deeds, such knowledge is to it the darkness of night 567 The name *ātmā* is given to this piece of flesh, and God is but a stone image. Beyond this belief their minds do not move 568. They assert also that with the death of the body, the soul also perishes, so in what form does the *ātmā* remain to enjoy what exists? 569. If there is one God, and if He causes us to experience the fruit of our actions, then how is it that one can sell the golden image of God and use the money for eating? 570. If the chief village god is really a punisher of wrong deeds, how is it that the mountain from which the stone idol is obtained remains quiet? 571 If perchance it is accepted that God exists, then one must understand that the stone idol is God, and that one's body is the *ātmā* 572 Such a man regards the very idea of sinful deeds and good deeds as false, so he does anything he likes, just as in the mouth of fire, everything is of service. 573 Those who regard as true experience only what the physical eyes see, and what the organ of taste declares to be sweet, 574 their growth, O Pārth, in such things is as useless as smoke rising in the air. 575 Just as the hollow stems that grow and break, in dry or green conditions, are of no use, so these are quite useless. 576. Useless they are as are the ears of the sugar-cane, or as impotent men, or as the forest cactus, 577. or as the mind of a child, or as stolen wealth in a thief's house, or as the goat's teat hanging from its chin 578. So that knowledge which seems useless and unproductive I call *tāmas* knowledge 579 A knowledge which is of this kind is spoken of as one does of a person blind from his birth, when we say his eyes are large 580. Just as by using slang phrases we speak of a deaf man as having a good hearing, or of undrinkable water that it is drinkable, so we have slang phrases for this knowledge It is *tāmas* knowledge. 581. Well, enough said on this point Knowledge of this kind is not real knowledge but

pure *tāmas* 582. And now, chief listener I have divided knowledge according to the characteristics of the three *gunas*. 583 Further O Dhanurdhar (Arjun) by the light of these three kinds of knowledge the doer's actions become manifest. 584 Just as water flows in the separate channels made for it so actions follow along the three channels of knowledge

## 23 Characteristics Of Sātvik Actions

*Deeds done that are enjoined that are done with an unattached mind and done without special love or hate, by one who has no desire for the fruits of those actions are called sātvik actions*

585 In accordance with these three forms of knowledge there are three forms of actions. Listen now first to the characteristics of the *sātvik* actions. 586 Acts that are done by the sanction of the mind that they are right acts, such as the embrace of her loved one (husband) by a dutiful wife 587 or as the sandalwood forms an adornment to a light coloured skin or as lamp-black is decorative to a woman's eyes all those actions are adornments to the regular authorized acts 588 when the usual deeds are done, they are assisted by the occasional It is like adding to gold the additional adornment of fragrance. 589 A mother expends on her child her bodily strength, her very soul and her wealth but she does not look on this with regret. 590 So he who does not look for fruits, performs all these acts as an offering to Brahma. 591 For example, a wife, when her dear one comes back is not anxious whether she has any food left for herself or whether she has used it all for him. So with the *karma* that does not count the time spent in doing reverence to a saint who is met 592 that is, the *karma* that does not cause the mind sorrow because not done, nor brings anger to the mind when left undone or if done, does not become conceited through its joy 593 O Dhananjay actions performed of this kind are *sātvik*, a designation given according to the *guna*



## 24. Meaning Of 'Rājas Karma'

*The 'karma' performed by a person looking for its fruits, or done by one with the pride of 'I have done it with great effort,' such 'karma' is called 'īājas karma'.*

594 'And now I will tell you of the *īājas karma* in a clear way. Do not fail to listen 595. He who does not speak reverently to his mother and father at his home and in their domestic affairs, but who like a fool fills the very universe by his reverent words to those outside his home, 596. or he who will not from a distance sprinkle water on a *tulsī* plant but will pour milk on the roots of a grape vine, 597. he who is so engrossed in performing the necessary regular and occasional religious acts that he cannot even get up, 598 he who in actions that have fruits can spend all his strength. and yet does not consider that of much account, 599 he who in transactions of interest in money or corn is not satisfied about the value paid, or is not satisfied when sowing his field, 600. he who obtains a touch-stone and cheerfully spends all he possesses for purchasing more iron, 601 he who seeing future fruit from his fruit-yielding deeds, does them, though difficult, and regards them as mere nothing, 602 such a desirer of fruit-bearing deeds performs according to prescribed rules those that produce fruit. 603. He publicly lets it be known that he has performed those deeds, and everywhere makes known the fact that he is a strict observer of those religious actions 604 And he becomes so filled with pride that he pays no attention to his father or his *guru*, just as the black plague pays no respect to remedies. 605 So are even the deeds done reverently by a man with a pride of what he has done and with a desire for the fruits of his actions 606 Yet he accomplishes those efforts with great effort, just as a rope-dancer performs his antics for his livelihood. 607 Just as a rat might dig into a mountain for one grain, or as a frog in search for slime might get the ocean muddled, 608 or just as a juggler, if he cannot get what he wants

by begging carries a snake around with him What is he to do! Some people like hard work! 609 Just as for the smallest morsel the white-ant will bore down into the lower regions, so such men will labour for the joys of heaven! 610 So recognize the actions that are done for their fruit's sake as called *rājas* actions. Now listen to the *tāmas* actions.

## 25 Tāmas Actions

*Actions which pay no attention to future results to possible destruction or injury of others because of love for its fruits those actions are called tāmas actions*

611 *Tāmas* actions are the black hole of calumny and make the prohibited life a success. 612. And after they are born their fruits are not to be seen any more than a line made on the surface of water 613 Just as when gruel is churned butter is not formed and when coals are blown, no jeweller's gold is formed and when pebbles are put in a mill no oil is obtained. 614 Useless acts are like winnowing chaff like shooting the sky like setting a snare for the air 615 Just as all these are barren of results and lead to nothing so are actions that after being performed bear no fruit. 616 On the contrary, this most precious and invaluable human body is spent in such a way that the actions it performs, destroy human happiness. 617 Just as when in drawing the pond-lotus out of the water a brush wood is used it costs effort and ruins the lotus flower 618 Or just as a moth irritated at the light attacks it, and not only destroys itself but (by causing darkness) removes as it were people's eyes 619 so are actions which are not only utterly useless, and give effort to the body but also when performed are injurious to others 620 they are like flies which cause themselves to be swallowed, but cause the disagreeable act of having to vomit them up so such actions remind one of this disgusting experience 621 Yet without thinking whether he has the ability to perform actions or not the man seeks to perform them 622 saying How great

have been my efforts, covering how great an extent!" and yet not looking at what he is to obtain from them after they are performed, 623. and who tramples under foot such reasonable thoughts and has pride in performing them, 624. or just as fire devours the place where it begins and then spreads, or as a rising tide exceeds its limits, 625 and then cares not for great or small obstructions, and flows along without looking to see whether it has any way or not, 626 so *tāmas karma* is haughtily regardless of right or wrong, and leaves no room for considering whether acts apply only to one's self or to others 627 So now, Arjun, I have described to you actions as characterized by their being divided by the three *gunas*. 628. And now the doer, by reason of his pride in these actions, is also to be considered from three points of view. 629 Just as a person appears in four forms according to the four conditions of life,\* so by the threefold form of the deeds he performs, he appears in three forms 630. I will now describe first the *sātvik* doer Let your ear give close attention.'

## 26 A 'Sātvik' Doer

*One who is detached from cleaving to earthly things, one who by courage and zeal is free from egoism, one who is not affected by his accomplishing a thing or not accomplishing it, that man is called a 'sātvik' doer*

631. 'Just as the sandalwood tree called the *bāvan* has no thought of yielding fruit and grows straight branches, the fragrance of the whole tree being its fruit, 632 or like the *betel* vine bears no fruit yet fulfils a purpose, so is one who performs his regular and occasional actions without reference to their fruit 633 But he should not be spoken of as not bearing fruit, because the actions are done without a desire for fruit;

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\* 'The four conditions of life,' or *chār āshram* or religious stages being (1) *Brahmacharya*, celibate life or student, (2) *Grihastha*, householder, (3) *Vānaprastha*, forest life, (4) *Sannyās*, abandonment of worldly possessions and earthly affections

for O Son of Pandu how can fruit beget fruit? 634 While performing his acts with the greatest reverence the thought "I am the doer" does not come to him just as the rainy season clouds think nothing of themselves 635 And in order to produce actions worthy to be offered to the Supreme Spirit 636 he avoids trespassing on time, and yet accomplishes the purification of his body after consultation of the scriptures in accordance with its teachings as to actions 637 uniting into one the sense-organs and their functions, and not letting the mind fix on the obtaining of fruit, and always wearing gladly the chain of obedience to law 638 he keeps in his mind a living concern for good courage to bear the restrictions placed upon him by the laws; 639 and in his love for the *Ātmā* he has no concern for his bodily enjoyments. 640 Casting aside all sloth and sleep he never thinks at all of hunger and because of this a happy physical state does not exist. 641 But as gold purified in the crucible may weigh less and increase in value when tested so he increases more and more his pleasure at deeds performed 642 If the wife loves her husband, living after his death seems to her a fault yet when she throws herself on the funeral pyre, will she notice the standing of her hair on end through fright? 643 Dhananjay one to whom the dear *Ātmā* is so precious, when he is giving pain to his body will he feel sorry? 644 And as his desire for sense-objects is broken off and the thought of his body grows less his joy doubles through those actions 645 If while performing these actions an occasion arises which causes them to cease, still he is not troubled thereby 646. Just as when a cart is thrown over a precipice the cart itself does not know it as a disaster so when actions cease, a *sātvik* doer is not troubled thereby 647 When a deed is reverently started, and then perfected in a faultless way he does not make any public show of having conquered its difficulties. 648 O Son of Pandu, he who performs his acts with these characteristics he is to be called a *sātvik* doer

## 27 The 'Rājas' Doer

*One who is a lover of pleasure, one who desires the fruit of his actions, one who is envious, one who would injure others, who is impure, who is affected by joy or sorrow, such an one is known as a 'rājas' doer.*

649. 'Dhananjay, I would now have you recognize a *rājas* doer, because he is the home of all worldly desires 650. Just as all the filth of a town has a dung heap in one place on which it is thrown, and as the cemetery is a place for all kinds of refuse, 651. so is he who has become the place where the desires of this world find a dirty place for the washing of their feet 652. And therefore wherever he sees an easy way of obtaining the fruits of actions, to those actions he turns his attention 653. He will not spend as much as a *laṇḍī* (a small shell) from the wealth he has accumulated, and yet again and again he waves the lighted platter of self-praise. 654. As a miser is most careful regarding his own store of wealth, and very clever regarding the wealth of others (i. e., to obtain it), and like a crane in order to catch fish pretends deep thought, 655. and like the *bor* tree, if one goes too near it, it holds him by its thorns, and if he seeks to free himself by use of violence gets deeply scratched, and the fruit when obtained is not so tasteful, 656. so he who through his mind, speech or deeds gives pain to others, and in seeking his own good does not look to the advantage of others, 657. and although he cannot continue what he begins yet he feels no mental dissatisfaction, 658. like the *dhotrā* fruit has seeds within which intoxicate and outside there are thorns, so is the *rājas* doer of no account either within or without 659. And, Dhananjay, if he does perform those actions and get the fruit, he drives people crazy by his expressions of joy 660. But if the actions he reverently began produce no fruit, then overcome by his disappointment he curses those actions 661. If you see anyone acting in this way, he is most certainly a *tāmas* doer.'

## 28 A Man As A Sink Of Iniquity

*One who is erratic, vulgar, too proud to speak & deceiver a hindrance to others indolent mournful one looking far ahead for his own advantage is called a tāmas doer*

662 And now I will tell you of the characteristics of that *tāmas* doer who is the very sink of iniquity 663 Just as a fire does not understand how it sets on fire that which comes before it, 664 or just as a sharp sword does not know how it kills anyone, or virulent poison how it destroys a person 665 so is he who destroys himself and others O Dhananjay by his disgusting deeds. 666. Like the course of a whirl wind he goes along taking no thought of what he is doing at the time of his acting 667 And, O Dhananjay with no unity between the *tāmas* doer and his acts, when we see such a crazy *tāmas* doer of what value are his crazy acts? 668 Just as the louse clings to the side of an ox, so is he who clings secretly to what his sense organs bring to him. 669 Just as a child does not know when it should laugh and when cry so a *tāmas* doer acts as he feels, 670 being under the impulses of his own nature, without considering whether his deeds are such as he ought to do, or ought not to do so the *tāmas* doer is puffed up as a dung heap is puffed up by the abundance of refuse. 671 As to submitting to others, he will not bow even to God, and in his silent pride he will pay no honour even to a mountain. 672. His mind is simply a wave of sensuality his daily doings are hidden sins, outwardly good, but inwardly like a prostitute's pious acts. 673 His body is embodied deceit, the rendezvous of gamblers. 674 He is not to be trusted he is in himself a village of thieving Bhils and no one should go that way 675 When another's good takes place he becomes his enemy just as when salt is put into milk it becomes undrinkable 676. and when a frozen thing is thrown on the fire, it immediately bursts out into flames. 677 Many

kinds of dainty foods go down into the body's store, but, O Kiriti, it all turns into excrement 678. So when seeing the good state of others, the feelings that are within such a man come out in the form of enmity 679. When he hears that another is good, he blames him, just as when a snake is fed with milk it turns that nectar into poison. 680. And when the moment arrives through his good deeds that he can both live in this world's peace and also obtain it in the beyond, 681 he goes to sleep as if that was his natural state, but when engaged in some evil deeds, sleep stays away from him as from a woman at certain periods of her life 682. And just as the crow's mouth rots at the season of grape juice or mango juice, or as the eyes of the owl ache in the daylight, 683 at the time for doing good he sees darkness and is devoured by laziness, but when engaged in evil his laziness does as he tells it to do 684. Just as the internal fire lives constantly alive in the depths of the ocean's water, so he carries his envious feelings ever with him 685. As smoke comes from the burning dung-cakes, or as vile odours proceed from some, so he carries about his evil thoughts 686. And, O warrior, though he looks to the time beyond the ages and pulls the string of actions that would fulfil his desires, 687. though he thus looks beyond this world, and although his wish extends there, he gets not a straw of success 688. Such a one in this mortal world you are to see as a heap of sins, and as in every way a *tāmas* doer 689. Thus I have shown you, O Chakravarti (paramount lord), the deeds, the doer, and the knowledge in the three characteristic forms '

## 29. Three Kinds Of Intellect And Courage

*'Intellectual conception and courage are divided into three kinds through the three different "gunas" which I am going to describe in detail O, Dhananjay'*

690. 'In the town of Ignorance, clothing one's self with illusion and adorning one's self with doubts, 691. the intellect which is the mirror of knowing that one is *ātmā*,

and that shows him all his details that intellectual conception also appears in three kinds. 692 Indeed Arjun what is there in this world that these three *gunas* (*satva* and the others,) have not divided into three forms? 693 What kind of wood is there in this world that has not fire in its centre? So what visible things are there that are not divided into these forms? 694 So three *gunas* have made three forms of intellectual conceptions and it is the same with courage. 695 I will now tell in detail their divisions according to the different forms. 696. O Dhananjay take two of them, intellectual conception and courage I will tell you first of the intellectual conception according to its divisions. 697 Good warrior there are three possibilities for those who enter this worldly existence the best the medium and the lowest. 698 These three paths are well known that which one should not do, that which is desirable to do, and what is forbidden to do. It is from these that injurious effects come through the fear of the earthly existence.

### 30 The Sātvik Intellectual Conception

*The intellectual conception which understands work and renunciation, the actions that should be performed and those which should not be that which is to be feared and that which need not be and understands also bondage and freedom that intellectual conception O Parth is the "sātvik."*

699 Actions accepted on scriptural authority which have come along through the Vedic stream these are the only best as regular actions 700 which, looking only on the fruit the attaining of the *ātmā* act as a thirsty man drinks water 701 Such actions free one from the fears of rebirths and deaths and make the way to final deliverance easy 702 He who does so does well, and loses the fear of this earthly existence, and by doing it he comes to the state of final deliverance. 703 The intellectual conception that fastens its truth on this has added final deliverance to itself. 704 So why should



not one dive down into that final deliverance that has put *larma* under foot? 705 To such the attainment of final deliverance is as sure to come as water relieves a thirsty man, or as the ability to swim comes to one in a flood, or as by the help of the rays of the sun one can see in a dark corner 706. Or as when a man takes medicine together with a proper diet, the diseased person lives, or when a fish has the water for his refuge. 707 Just as there is no question about its living in it, so if he performs these deeds final deliverance will of necessity be connected with them, 708 having the knowledge which knows when to perform deeds and those that are not to be done, 709 and having desires connected with them, and causing fears connected with birth and death, by which the stain of improper deeds has been sprinkled upon them, 710. and sending to the rear the inclination of the intellect towards improper acts, and the fear arousing births and deaths. 711 One cannot enter into a fire, or dive into deep water, or hold in the hand a red hot trident 712 One would not seize in his hand a hissing serpent, nor enter the cave of a tiger 713 The mind no doubt is aroused when seeing the great fear connected with acts that are improper 714 As death cannot be evaded when poison is put into food, so earthly bondage cannot be evaded if one does acts that are forbidden, 715. and seeing that if the forbidden things are done, all the fears of bondage will be connected with them, realising this, there is a turning away from such deeds. 716 And just as a jeweller examines the true and the false jewels, so is he who examines the act to be done and those not to be done, from the standpoint of what tends to earthly things and what to spiritual things 717 Hence the mind that clearly understands the difference between the acts that should be done, and those that should not, that mind is called *sātvik* '

### 31 A Rājas Mind

*The mind that does not properly understand the difference between what is lawful and what is unlawful what deeds should be done and what should not be done that mind O Pārth is a "rājas" mind*

718 Just as in a community of cranes, they would drink milk mixed with water or as a blind man cannot distinguish between day and night 719 or though the bumble bee obtains the honey of the flowers, yet because it can bore into wood that does not destroy its bumble bee character 720 so is the mind that performs lawful and unlawful acts, those that should be done and those that should not be done, without distinguishing between them. 721 Arjun! to buy a pearl without examination will seldom bring one a good pearl, and surely good ones cannot be obtained in that way 722. So if a deed that should not be done does not come prominently before one, the *rājas* mind performs both the good and the bad alike 723 So the mind that, in reference to purity acts in the way one would if he gave a public invitation without considering popular sentiment, that mind is *rājas*

### 32 The Tāmas Mind

*O Pārth the mind that regards the unlawful as lawful and is perverted by all kinds of evil thoughts that mind is a tāmas mind O Pārth*

724 The royal road should always be avoided by a thief To a demon the night is (used as) day 725 To a man who is without good fortune, a mine of wealth is no more than a pile of charcoal, and the wealth he happens to have with him seems to him nothing at all. 726. So is the person who considers the actions as approved by *śāstras* sinful, and considers the true to be false 727 rejecting the plain meaning of the *śāstras* he adopts a misinterpretation and that which is good he considers blameworthy 728. such a mind views as objectionable

that which has been accepted as the teaching of the Vedas 729. O Son of Pandu, such a mind should be called *tāmas* without any questioning. Of what use is a mind which is in night darkness regarding religious and earthly duties? 730 O Moon of intelligence that opens the lotus-flower of self-knowledge, I have now told you plainly the differences of the mind'

### 33 Three Kinds Of Courage

*'The courage (or will) by whose fixed operation the mind and other sense organs are regulated, O Pārth (Arjun), that courage, linked with "yoga," is called "sātvik" courage'*

731 'Now when this mind undertakes to perform an action, then that will is called courage (*dhṛiti*) and it has also three divisions 732 I will now tell you in plain language the three forms of courage (the will). 733 When the sun is risen it stops the dark deed of thieving When the king's command is issued, evil deeds are hindered 734 When the gusts of wind blow, the clouds themselves disappear along with the thunder 735 At the sight of the *munī* Agastī, the sea stopped her roaring At the rising of the moon the sun-lotus closes itself 736. If a roaring lion appears before an intoxicated elephant, the latter does not know how to put down a foot that he may have lifted up 737. So when this *sātvik* courage has arisen, the mind and other senses stop their functioning. 738 Then, O Kīrītī, the connection of the sense organs and their objects ceases and the ten senses enter the womb of their mother the mind 739 Courage or *sātvik* steadiness binds together the nine vital airs after shutting them into the veins of the body 740 The mind, having disrobed herself of her right and wrong thoughts in her naked condition, goes and stands behind the intellect. 741 King Courage causes the argument between the individual deeds of the mind, the life principle and the sense organs, to cease 742 And by itself alone courage confines all the sense organs in the chamber very cleverly, by means of *yoga*.

743 And until courage hands them over to the hand of the universal ruler the Supreme Ātmā it holds them without accepting any bribes. 744 I have now described to you the *sātvik* courage? So said the glorious one to Arjun.

### 34 The Courage That Is Rājas

*The courage that works itself out in religious acts in social duties and in things of this life and on occasion becomes desirous of fruit that courage O Parth is rājas .*

745 While in the body courage lives its life in joy in heaven and in this earthly life by means of religious acts religious duties and desires. 746. He who in the ship of religious laws, earthly wealth and desires on the sea of longing carries on his mercantile business of actions by the power of his courage, 747 and considers that by investing a capital of actions, the courage that thus labours sees a dividend of four times the amount invested 748 that courage, O Parth, is *rājas* Now listen to *tāmas* courage, which is the third kind.

### 35 The Courage That Is Tāmas

*The courage by whose means an evil minded man does not let go his sleep his fear his mourning his complaining and his pride that courage is called "tāmas" courage*

749 The man whose essential character manifests the lowest *gunas* like the charcoal that is made of blackness, 750 to one so vulgar and devoid of goodness, why ascribe any *guna* at all? Even good people speak of a monster as such 751 Among the planets, though Mars is like fire, it has the appellation of being *mangal* (or auspicious) so the placing of *guna* (quality) after *tāmas* is done thoughtlessly 752 So good warrior *tāmas* is a home of all faults and a refuge of the man born in it. 753 Just as when sin is nourished sorrow never leaves one, so when carrying sloth under his arm sleep

never leaves him 754. And just as a stone cannot leave off its hardness, so because of his love of his body and wealth, fear never leaves him. 755. Just as from one ungrateful, do what one will, his sin does not go away, so a *tāmas* man attached to the things of this life, sorrow does not leave him 756 And as that *tāmas* man keeps his dissatisfaction day and night, his sorrow makes him his friend 757 As garlick does not lose its ill odour, as undigestable food does not forsake disease, so until death sorrow clings to a *tāmas* man 758. He who prides himself on his youth, his wealth and luxuries, intoxication makes its refuge with him. 759. As heat will not leave fire, as a live snake does not leave its vicious habits, so fear, the enemy of the whole world, does not leave him. 760 As death never leaves a man, so intoxication of the mind never leaves a man of the *tāmas* kind. 761. 'So that the collection of five blemishes (sleep, etc) are the evils of *tāmas* and belong to *tāmas* courage. 762. Arjun! that courage is called *tāmas* courage,' so said the God of the world. 763. 'So are the three kinds of intellects which perform actions, and which courage (or the will) carries to completion 764. After the sun has risen, men can see the path on which they may go, but they need the will (or courage) to walk 765 Intellect shows the way for action, and the action makes the sense-organ to function, but for this the will (or courage) is needed 766. Arjun! I have thus told you the three kinds of courage, which beget the three kinds of actions 767 The fruit of them which is happiness, this, like the actions themselves, is of three kinds 768. The fruits, namely, the happiness that comes from actions, they differ from one another according to the three *gunas* Now I will speak of them in plain language 769 You may ask how one can describe them accurately, for the description is by way of words, and through the ear, and the pollution of the ear-hand attaches itself to the description 770. Therefore listen to that consciousness whereby what is rejected leads to the rejection also of hearing'

### 36 Three Forms Of Happiness

*Listen to the three forms of happiness O Chief of the Bharatas by whose constant use the soul enjoys itself and by which its sorrow is made to die.*

771 Having said this God proceeded to discuss the three forms of happiness as follows. 772 O Arjun listen now to the three forms of happiness, which I promised to describe. 773 O Kṛitī when the individual soul meets the universal soul (Ātmā) the happiness which then takes place will now be shown to you. 774 Just as divine medicine is taken in earthly measures, and as by means of chemical formulas tin is turned into silver 775 or as in order to make salt water water has to be poured over it three or four times 776, so when by effort even the smallest amount of happiness is obtained, by its increase the sorrows of life are destroyed 777 that ātma happiness is also to be differentiated according to three guṇas which forms will now be mentioned one by one.

### 37 Sātvik Happiness

*The happiness which at its beginning is like poison but ends in being like nectar that happiness produced from the ātmā and the human intellect is called sātvik happiness*

778 The trunk of the sandalwood tree is feared because of the presence of a snake there or because the opening into a treasure-mine is fearful because of ghosts. 779 O Arjun, the good of heaven is hindered by the obstacle of having to perform sacrifices and childhood's troubles have to be endured by a mother 780 When lighting a fire the discomfort of the smoke has to be endured and when medicine is taken its bitterness has to be endured by the tongue 781 so, O Pāṇḍav in order to acquire the happiness of the ātmā there is the unpleasantness of yama (restraint) and dama (endurance) 782 And when such indifference to worldly things is aroused, like fire that takes into its embrace every form of desires, then

it removes the hedge between heaven and this earthly life 783. And while listening to such knowledge, and performing such rigorous actions, the intellect and other sense organs are made into stuffed animals, as it were. 784. The middle vital air has to swallow down its mouth the great flow of the upper and lower airs. Such is the discomfort at first 785 What happens when a pair of Brahmany geese are separated? What happens when a sucking calf is taken away from its mother? Or when a beggar is driven away from the plate on which he is eating? 786 What happens when death takes away an only child from its mother, or as a fish suffers when taken from the water? 787. So when the senses have to leave the home of sensual desires they go through extraordinary suffering, but those brave ones who have become indifferent to earthly things, they bear the pain with equanimity 788 So that happiness which has pain at its beginning, is like the pain caused at the churning of the sea of milk, with the gain of nectar later 789. Because he was ready to drink the poison of indifference to earthly things, the brave Shiva was able to enjoy the nectar of knowledge 790 When grapes are green their acidity is as keen as would be a live coal, but when the grape is ripe it is sweet to the taste. 791. When by the light of the *ātmanā*, indifference to earthly things (*vairāgya*) is ripened, it destroys all forms of ignorance along with *vairāgya* itself. 792 When the Ganges joins the ocean, the joy that then takes place is the joy of the non-dual conception when it unites with the *ātmanā* 793. So the happiness which has *vairāgya* as its root, and whose end is the attaining of the *ātmanā*, that happiness is called the *sātvik* happiness'

### 38. 'Rājas' Happiness

*'That happiness which by its connection with the organs of sense is at its beginning like nectar, but at its end is like poison, that happiness is "rājas" happiness, according to the scriptures.'*

794 Dhananjay the happiness that comes by the union of the objects of sense with the organs of sense, and which flows as it were like a flood overflowing both banks 795 or as is the joyous festival when the ruler returns to his realm or the joy of one who incurs a debt for the sake of celebrating a wedding 796. and as sugar is sweet to the taste of a sick man, and a banana also and as the poisonous *bachinag* is sweet at first 797 as the friendship of a false friend (or friend in disguise) is at first happy pleasant at first are the actions of a prostitute as are also the amusing variety of the players 798 so at the meeting of the sense objects and the sense-organs the pleasure that feeds the soul is like that of the swan that swoops down on a rocky place and dies, seeing a reflection of the stars in a pool 799 the riches of the pleasures of life dry up, and even life is destroyed and riches of good action are destroyed. 800 And the objects enjoyed become nothing as dreams do, then there remains nothing to do but roll in the mire of disaster 801 *Rājas* happiness gained in this life has an ending of this kind in the other world it becomes poison. 802. For when the sense organs are allowed to please themselves, by giving over to them this garden of duties, they destroy it by burning it and there enjoy the *rajas* happiness. 803 Then sins find their chance and become very strong and make the sinner attain hell. In short it is a joy that brings calamity in the other world. 804 Just as *vish* (poison) is sweet by name only but in its effect destroys life, so this world's happiness at the beginning is sweet but bitter at the end. 805 O Parth, that happiness is simply made of the *rājas* guna so it should never even be touched

### 39 The Tamas Kind Of Happiness

*The happiness that has its source in sleep sloth and heedlessness and which at its beginning and at its end leads the "ātmā into gratifying its desires that happiness is called tāmas" happiness*



806 'The happiness that comes from drinking what should not be drunk, from eating what should not be eaten, that comes from association with a prostitute, 807. the happiness which comes from injuring others, from robbing others, or that which comes from the praise of poets, 808 the happiness that is fed by sloth, or by what is seen in dreams and which at its beginning and its end dims one's true way, 809 that happiness, Pārth, is *tāmas* happiness. But I do not dwell on this at length because it should not be called happiness 810. By the differences of actions, their fruits are of three kinds, and these have now been made plain to you in accordance with the scriptures 811 In all this world nothing small or great can be found in which there are not these three, the doer, the action and the result of the action. 812. And this group of threes, O Kīrītī, are interwoven as cloth is made by the interweaving of threads.'

#### 40. The Three 'Gunas' Are Universal

*'There is no being on this earth, in heaven or among the gods, who is free from these three nature-born "gunas"'*

813 'Therefore in the whole span of the world of nature, there is no substance in heaven or in this world of mortals that is not bound by the laws of these three *gunas*, *satva* and the others 814 How can there be a woollen blanket without wool, a clod without clay, or a wave without water? 815 So there is no being in this universe who is without these three *gunas*. 816. So bear in mind that all things are formed by these three *gunas* 817 It is these three *gunas* that have made the One God into three gods (Brahmā, Vishnu and Shiva), and made three worlds (heaven, earth and hell), of this natural world, and the four castes and their different spheres'

#### 41 The Four Chief Castes

*'O Scorchers of Foes, the spheres of Brāhmīns, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shūdras are separate according to the nature of the influencing "gunas"'*

818 As for these four castes who they are the Brahmin stands first among them 819 The Kshatriya and Vaishya, are both to be considered equal to the Brahmins because they are worthy of performing the Vedic requirements 820 O Dhananjay the fourth caste the Shudra has no authority in the requirements of the Vedas, but is under the other three to render them service 821 Because of the Shudra's nearness to the three castes the Brahmins and the others he is included in the four castes 822 Just as because of its needed association with flowers the rich accept the string that makes the garland so the Vedas accept the Shudras because of their close association with the twice born 823 Such, O Parth is the arrangement of the four castes And now I shall describe the way in which they must act 824 By those *gunas* the four castes escape the difficulties of rebirths and deaths and attain to God 825 The material cause of the world with the help of the four castes has divided up their respective duties 826 Just as a father divides his property among his children as the sun shows the different ways to travellers, and as the master distributes various duties to his servants 827 so the qualities of the material cause of the world have made the distribution of different duties to the four castes 828 In that sphere the *satva guna* in the form of superior and inferior has joined the Brahmin and Kshatriya together 829 And by the mixture of the *satva* and *raja guna* there it has placed the Vaishya, and by the mixture of the *raja* and *tama gunas* the Shudra is given his place 830 Thus O Intellectual Arjun, the *gunas* of mankind have separated it into the four castes 831 One naturally sees by the light according as it is placed and so the scriptures show the duties according to the different *gunas*

#### 42 The Duties Of A Brāhmin

*The natural duties of a Brāhmin are peace of heart, control of the sense organs keeping God always in remembrance purity both within and without forgiveness rectitude*

*knowledge of God, the personal experience of God, and trust in the scriptures'*

832. 'Now, O Happy One, I shall tell you what special duties the scriptures prescribe to each caste. 833 Just as one meets her beloved in private, so the intellect meets the *ātmā*, taking all the functions of the sense organs in her hands 834. To that humility of the intellect is given the name of *shama* (peace) That good quality stands first among duties and all good actions begin here. 835. And the code of scriptural laws does not allow the outer sense organs to go in the path of disobedience of law 836 O Arjun, that is the second helper of *shama* (peace), making the organs fulfil their duties. 837 The sixth night after a birth the lamp is not neglected, to carry always the thought of God, 838 that is called *tapa* (keeping God always in remembrance) This is the third form of duty. And the *shauch* (purity) which is faultless is of two kinds, 839 the mind filled with pure trust, and the whole body adorned by good deeds, and embellished by inner and outer purity 840 That, O Pārth, is called *shauch* (purity), and is fourth among the duties of a Brāhmin. *Shānti* (peace) is that which bears all sorrows just as does this earth, 841 that, O Pāndav, is *kṣamā* (forgiveness), the fifth duty, as in an octave the fifth note is sweet. 842. Though the Ganges is a winding river, the water is the same as if it flowed straight, and though the sugar-cane stalks may be crooked, the sugar-cane is just as sweet (as if straight) 843. So among those who make life unhappy the quality that causes a straightforward action, that is *ārjav* (rectitude) and is the sixth of a Brāhmin's duties 844 As a gardener expending effort in watering the roots of the plants continually, sees them all in the forms of fruit, 845. so acting in obedience to the scriptures with the one object of attaining God and of understanding this, that is knowledge 846. And that is the seventh *guna* connected with actions The character of *vidnyān* (knowledge of God or truth) is the same. 847 The understanding which

one gets most certainly by means of the scriptures and by the power of meditation is unity with the divine essence. 848 That *vidnyān* (or experimental knowledge) is the eighth among the *guna* jewels. *Āstikya* (trust in the scriptures) is to be considered the ninth quality. 849 He who has the royal stamp of authority given him is a subject for respect whoever he may be so is the way that is acceptable to the scriptures. 850 To respect that way with reverence, that is called *astikya* (trust in the scriptures). That is the ninth *guna* and by it actions become really true. 851 Where these nine *gunas* *shama* (peace) and the others, are faultlessly observed those are the natural duties of a Brahmin. 852 A Brahmin is a sea of such nine qualities and as the sun never stops his light so the Brahmin always wears his garland of these nine jewels. 853 And just as the *chāpha* tree is beautified by its *chāphā* flowers, as the moon is made bright by her silver light, and as the sandalwood tree is made fragrant by its own fragrance. 854 so this perfect ornament of nine *gunas* of a Brāhmin being a part of his very self never leaves him.

### 43 Duties Of A Kshatriya

*Self reliance activity courage skill never running from the battle field generosity ability to rule these are the natural duties of a Kshatriya*

855 Now Dhananjay I shall tell you of the proper actions for a *Kshatriya*. Listen with all the power of your mind. 856 Just as the sun does not look for any help in order to shine as the lion does not need a companion. 857 so that quality which is self dependent, and without any aid is strong that quality is called *shaurya* (self reliance) and is the foremost *guna*. 858 The sun by its might dims all the billions of stars, but even with the help of the moon they cannot dim the splendour of the sun. 859 So by their heroism Kshatriyas, cause the whole world to wonder and yet are never disturbed by any crisis. 860 So this *teja* (prowess) is the second of

their qualities ( *gunas* ) The third *guna* is *dhairya* (courage), 861 Though the heavens should fall upon them, they would not so much as wink their mental eye, that is called *dhairya* (courage) 862 However deep the water may be where the lotus comes up to the surface or as the sly in its height overtops whatever it wishes, 863. so whatever the occasion may be, O Pārth, conquering it and gaining the fruits of those occasions, 864 he has the vigilance called *dakṣatā* ( skill ), the fourth quality, extraordinary heroism in battle is the fifth *guna* 865 As the sun-lotus always faces the sun, so is the quality of always facing the enemy 866 As a woman in various periods avoids her husband, so on the battlefield a Kshatriya never turns his back to the enemy 867 As *bhakti* is chief among the four ways, so among the Kshatriya's duties this is the fifth, just as Indra is great among the gods 868. As branches freely give foliage, flowers and fruit, as the lotus generously gives of its fragrance, 869. and as one can take of the moonlight as much as one desires, to give to one before him according to his desires, 870 so this limitless giving is the sixth jewel of a quality The Kshatriya race is the only place to command the Vedas to stay 871 After nourishing one's various bodily parts, one uses them as one desires, so after having protected his subjects the king enjoys their services 872 The name of that is *Ishvaribhav* (ability to rule), the home of all power, king among all the *gunas*, and the seventh 873. So the man who is adorned with these seven special qualities of heroism and the like, he shines in the heavens like the seven stars of the Pleiades 874 So those seven special *gunas* which purify the world are the natural *gunas* of the *Kshatriyas*. 875. Such a man is not only a *Kshatriya*, but a Mount Meru having the gold of the *satva guna* (goodness quality) and he becomes the supporter of the seven heavens by these oceans of seven *gunas* 876 This is not what is called action, so much as it is the man's enjoyment of the earth encircled by the sea of the seven *gunas* 877 And the stream of the seven *gunas*

longing to the Kshatriya's duties is the Ganges, and in its mighty flow of water he finds his enjoyment. 878 Well, this is sufficient. These seven *gunas* heroism and the others, are the natural duties of the *Kshatriyas*

#### 4 Duties Of The Vaishya And Shūdra

*Agriculture dairy business, and trade are the natural duties of a Vaishya. But acts of service are the natural duties of the "Shūdras"*

879 Intellectual Arjun, I shall tell you the duties of the *Vaishya* 880 With a capital of field seed and plough to acquire unlimited wealth 881 or further to live on agriculture, to possess herds of cattle, or to purchase cheap and sell dear 882 O Pandav these are the group of *Vaishya* duties on which the *Vaishya* naturally lives, and are his duties 883 The three, Brahmin Kshatriya, and *Vaishya* are the three twice-born and the duties of the *Shūdra* are to serve them 884 Aside from the service of the twice-born the *Shūdra* must not rush into other duties. Thus now I have shown you the duties of the four castes.

#### 5 How To Achieve Life's Purpose

*The man who is absorbed in his own proper duties obtains the full purpose of life Now listen how that full purpose is attained.*

885 And now wise Arjun how the different castes have their proper duties, just as sound and the others have their corresponding organs of sense 886. and just as the rivers are rightly fitted for the water that falls from the clouds or Son of Pandu, as the sea is fitted for the rivers 887 and when duties are performed in the four states of life, it is like the complexion becoming more charming through its fairness. 888. How to carry out those actions that by the word of scriptures applies to the natural duties, O hero, let your mind be

firmly fixed 889. As one has to test a gem by a jewel expert, so one must test one's own duties by the scriptures 890 Although one may possess eyes, still light is necessary for their use, and although one may have feet, the path must be known. 891 Therefore the authoritative statement regarding the duties of one's caste should be followed according to the scriptures 892 O Pāṇḍav, when the light shows to the eye the stores in the house, is there any hindrance in taking them? 893. So when one acts according to one's natural caste-duties, and they are confirmed by the scriptures, he who lives these prescribed duties, 894 by putting away sloth, and driving from him desires for the fruit of his actions, and putting his very life into them in all its abundance, 895 as water when it enters into a stream no longer meanders anywhere, so is he who acts in accordance with the scriptures 896 O Arjun, he who performs his prescribed duties, he is already in this life at the door of final deliverance 897. And not allowing himself to do those things which are morally wrong, and wrong also because forbidden in the scriptures, he then is freed from the fears of this earthly life which are opposed to the attaining of the *ātmā* 898 Such an one does not turn to the pleasures of the fruits of actions, just as one's feet will not accept stocks made even of sandalwood 899 And having rejected the fruits of the regular actions, he thereby comes to the very border of final deliverance 900 By this means he frees himself from actions, and from the auspicious and inauspicious earthly life, and he comes and stands at the door of final deliverance, which means indifference to earthly things 901 The *vairāgya* that forms the limit of all fortunate states, is the place where there is determination to acquire final deliverance, where the hard labour of the *karma mārga* is ended, 902 where there is salvation as the fruit of final deliverance, and also the flower of the tree of good deeds, on which the bumble bees of the doer place their feet. 903 And as it is the dawn that announces the rising of

the sun so it is *vairāgya* (indifference to earthly things) that announces the rise of the happy day of the knowledge of the *ātmā* (soul) 904 Moreover, the treasure store in the form of the knowledge of the *ātmā* comes into one's hand through the divine eye-salve of indifference to earthly things (*vairāgya*) so that he puts it into his eye with a heartfelt intent. 905 Son of Panda he who performs prescribed actions in this way, he becomes worthy of final deliverance.\* 906. O Pāṇḍav the actions which are prescribed in the scriptures, they are the one dear thing to us, and in obeying them is my supreme service. 907 In all things which the husband enjoys, the faithful wife joins with him, and so all her behaviour should likewise receive the name of austerities. 908 What is the value of a child's life except as it depends on its mother? And so the child's supreme service is for its mother 909 Like a fish which assumes that the water of the *Ganges* is mere common water yet by connection with it obtains all the value of the other sacred bathing places, 910 there is no other way but to obey without neglect the duties prescribed by the scriptures, and if so the responsibility is then on the Lord of the world. 911 The duties that have been prescribed express God's wish therefore in performing them God is attained without a doubt. 912 Although a female slave, if she meet the approval of the king may become the mistress of all or when one risks his life for the king it is recorded and he is presented with a gift 913 so not to fail in doing a single wish of the Lord that is supreme service any other kind of service, O Pāṇḍav (Arjun) is mere commercial service.

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Here Dr. Justin Abbott had typed the following note '905 verses are exactly half of the 18th chapter I stop here for a few days rest.' This rest we calculate was taken by the learned Doctor only a few weeks before the end came.



## 46. How Man Attains His Full Purpose

*'That by which all beings come to exist, and by which all is pervaded, by worshipping that (through his own duty) a man attains the full purpose of life.'*

914. 'So if one performs the prescribed duties, it is not that he has performed them but that he has observed the wishes of Him by whom all beings are in their present form. 915. He who binds together the rags of ignorance, making a cord of the three *gunas*, makes the dolls dance (with fullness of life). 916. He by whom the whole of this world is filled, both within and without, just as a light illumines inside and outside, 917. when, O hero, He who is the soul of all things is worshipped with the flowers of one's duties performed, He is supremely pleased 918. And God being pleased by that worship gives to a man the spirit of indifference to earthly things, which is His blessing. 919 And through that indifference to earthly things God is loved, and all other things become distasteful. 920. When by separation from the lord of her life, the wife feels it painful to remain alive, so to a devoted soul all the joys of this earthly life seem merely painful. 921. And even before he acquires complete knowledge, the instruction he receives leads to absorption into the Divine Such is the value of that instruction. 922 So he who has the desire for final deliverance must perform his true duties with the greatest effort'

## 47. Caste-Duties Natural

*'One's own special duties, though lacking in quality, are more advantageous than the duties of others, though well performed The actions that arise from a man's caste-position bring no sin to him'*

923. 'Although one's special duties may be difficult, still one must look at the result of those actions 924 O Dhananjay, if from the bitter *numb* tree, one has happy results, one should not feel dislike at its bitterness. 925. If before

the ripening of the banana one looks at the tree with discouragement and rejects it, where can one get the good fruit? 926. When the performance of one's special duties are difficult and so are regarded as bitter then the joy of final deliverance is lost. 927 Even if one's mother is deformed, yet her love by which a man lives is not crooked. 928 Other women may be more beautiful than Rambhā, but what has the child to do with them? 929 There are many qualities in clarified butter not found in water but a fish would have nothing to do with them. 930 That which is like poison to all the world is nectar to the worm in a poisonous plant what is raw sugar to the world is death to that worm. 931 So whatever actions are prescribed by the scriptures, and those by which the bondage to earthly things is broken they should be performed however hard they may be. 932. To perform the duties belonging to others, though good is like making the head act for the feet, and may bring unhappy results. 933 So that by performing the duties prescribed to each caste one conquers the bondage of one's *karma* 934 So one does not need O Pandav the law of eliminating the duties of the other castes and of performing one's own special duties 935 But do one's duties cease until the *ātmā* is seen? No, the duties must be performed, though at first they may be difficult

#### 48 Caste Duties Are Obligatory

*O Son of Kuntī (Arjun) the duties that arise from one's birth, although they may contain faults yet they must not be rejected All actions at their beginning have faults as at the beginning of a fire there is smoke.*

936 Though at the beginning of any duties there are troubles, what fault can be found in working on the lines of one's own special duties? 937 If one walks in a straight path he has to use his feet, and if he has to walk in some wild path the same thing happens. 938. O Dhananjay (Arjun) whether one carries a stone or a light meal the weight is much the same so one

should take with him what will satisfy at the place where he rests. 939. One has the same effort in removing the grain or in removing the chaff, the same effort to cook flesh for a dog as in cooking for the burnt sacrifice 940. O clever Arjun, the effort of churning cream and water is the same, also that of putting in the oil press sand or the til seed. 941 Dhananjay, to prepare a burnt offering and to kindle ordinary fire, one has to endure the same smoke 942 It is the same cost to support a faithful wife or a mistress, then why spend money in a way to bring one a bad reputation? 943 If turning one's back in the battle does not save one's life from the wounds, would not death in facing the enemy be a better way? 944 If a woman of bad family enters another's house and gets a good beating, is this not a useless forsaking of her husband? 945 If in the performance of any deed there is required special effort, why call it a tedious task if it happens to be the performance of a prescribed act? 946. O Son of Pandu, why should one not spend his all on a little nectar that will give immortality? 947. Why spend one's money in purchasing the poison by which one commits suicide? 948 So by taxing one's organs of sense and spending one's days in heaping up evil deeds, what other result can there be than that of pain? 949. Therefore one should perform his special duties, and God will put away his difficulties and give him the supremely great gift of final deliverance 950 Therefore, O Kīrītī, one should not neglect the regular performance of his special duties, just as one does not neglect the *mantra* that accomplishes results 951. Just as one should not leave the ship on the ocean, or as a man with severe disease should not abandon medicine, so he should not neglect his special duties 952. O Kapīdhvaj, God being pleased with the performance of his special duties, through this high form of worship, he will destroy the *raja* and *tama* *gunas* 953. He will help him to walk a good path, and make him feel that earth and heaven are like virulent poison. 954. And the indifference which was explained in section 45,

He helps him to acquire that state. 955 And after he has won for himself this state of indifference to earthly things, the worthiness which he attains, or what his gain is when reaching that state, I will now tell you.

#### 49 The Mind That Is Unattached

*He whose mind is unattached to earthly things, who has conquered himself whose desires have disappeared he by means of 'sannyās' arrives at the state of supreme cessation of action*

956 Just as the air is not hindered from flowing here and there by being caught in a hunter's net so those who in body are caught in the snare of this earthly existence are not confined by it. 957 Just as ripe fruit does not hold the stem, nor the stem hold it so all affections for the earthly life become lifeless. 958 As no one claims a pot of poison so no one claims son, wealth or wife, though acquiescent, as his own. 959 In brief just as a man withdraws his hand when burnt by something hot so his mind turns back from the pleasures of sense and goes after the soul knowledge. 960 Just as out of fear a female slave does not disobey her master in the same way the mind does not break the promise (oath) given to the soul, by again turning to the pleasures of sense. 961 So also, Kṛti, he holds down the mind under the thumb of union and makes it crave for soul knowledge. 962 Then as no smoke comes out of the fire buried under ashes, so desires for earthly and spiritual life naturally vanish. 963 Therefore when the mind is determined, desire itself vanishes. What is the good of describing it at full length? Such a ground the practiser obtains. 964 Oh Pāṇḍav all his adverse knowledge vanishes, and true knowledge comes in its place. 965 As stored up water is consumed by daily use, so the action which has commenced at one's birth is consumed by enjoyment, and on account of the absence of the sense of a doer new action is not produced. 966. Oh hero, when all actions arrive at a

state of consumption in this way, then naturally there is a meeting with the Guru. 967. When twelve hours of the night pass away, the destroyer of darkness, the sun, is seen, 968. just as a man stunts the growth of the banana tree by taking away the bunch of banana fruit, so in like manner the meeting with the Guru stops the effort of action and of the doer of it, that is, of the seeker after knowledge. 969. Then just as there is no diminution in the phases of the moon on the full moon day, so, oh chief of warriors, when the seeker after knowledge has had the favour of the Guru, then no defect whatsoever is left. 970 By his favour ignorance is destroyed And then just as at the end of night, darkness vanishes, 971. so, when ignorance itself is destroyed, the aggregate (viz., the agent, the object and the action depending on it) is also destroyed, just as when a woman with child is killed, the child in her womb is also destroyed with her naturally. 972 So when ignorance is destroyed, all actions are destroyed, and this destruction of all actions is called *samnyās*, and this he attains. 973. When by knowledge all visible things are destroyed, then his own self is the thing which remains to be known. 974. When a man is awake from sleep, will he consider it as true that he was being drowned in deep water in his dream, and will he endeavour to extricate himself from the puzzle? 975 In the same manner, "I do not know, but I will try to know it," this his evil dream is destroyed, the object to be known and the knower both vanish, then he becomes nothing, but is knowledge himself 976 Oh hero, when a looking-glass is removed with its reflection, then there is only the seer without the object of sight 977 In the same manner, ignorance does not go alone It takes away with it knowledge also. Then the knowledge which remains is without action. 978. Dhananjay, this knowledge without action is naturally without any action, and therefore that state is called accomplishment without action. 979 When the wind is calm, the waves on the ocean are also quiet, so with self-knowledge ordinary

knowledge is destroyed and it is absorbed in its own form 980 This absence of action is called accomplishment without action, and this is the chief of all accomplishments. 981 When the pinnacle of a temple is erected the entire building of the temple is completed just as when the Ganges joins the ocean, its original name no more remains or after the sixteenth test there no more remains the cleaning of the gold 982 so the knowledge which removes our ignorance is itself destroyed 983 because there remains nothing more to be obtained that state is called the highest accomplishment.

## 50 The Highest Accomplishment

*O Son of Kuntī (Arjun) listen as I tell you by what method a man slowly becomes a spiritual authority concerning the Brahma as the final limit of knowledge about supreme soul*

984 'One who is greatly fortunate through the favour of the Guru obtains this self-accomplishment. 985 Just as at sunrise, darkness turns into light or as soon as camphor touches the flame of a light, it becomes itself a light 986 or as a lump of salt when dissolved in water is turned into water 987 or when a sleeper is awakened from sleep, his sleep vanishes with its false dream, and he comes again to his former state 988 in the same manner is he whose feeling of mind fortunately destroys difference by listening to his guru's advice, and becomes steady in himself 989 Kirtī anyone can accomplish self-manifestation as soon as the mystic *mantra* of his *guru* falls on his ear 990 Who can say of him that such a one leaves anything to be done? The sky pervades every space it has not to move from one place to another 991 Then without doubt such a one has nothing to do at all But in the case of many a person this state does not at once take place 992 although he has burnt away *raja* and *tama* qualities in the fire of the proper performance of actions by kindling the fuel of actions done with a desire

and prohibited, 993. and although he has entirely overpowered covetousness like a slave, 994. and although he has cleansed in the holy water of determination the organs of sense which were self-willed and smeared with the taint of sensual pleasures; 995. and although he has resigned to God the fruit of his religious observance, and thereby has acquired steady indifference to worldly things, 996 in this way, although he has stored all requisite things for the growth of knowledge, 997. and just at this juncture he meets with a *sadguru*, who without any reserve clearly explains to him the soul-knowledge, 998. still, the human physique does not come to its normal state as soon as it receives medicine; nor can there be midday at sunrise, 999. though good seed is sown in fertile land, and timely rain comes in plenty, harvest comes only at the proper season 1000 We naturally reach our destination on our journey, if the way is straight, easy, and clean and have good company besides, but in addition to the above things it requires time 1001. In the same way, even if one is full of indifference to worldly things, and meets with a *sadguru*, and in his heart the supreme soul-knowledge is sprouted; 1002. and even if that knowledge enables us to prove that Brahma is the only one full of truth, and that everything else is a net of illusion created by God's *māyā*, 1003. still that supreme Brahma is so all-pervading and so supreme that even the word "salvation" disappears. 1004 It swallows the aggregate, namely the knower, the object of knowing, and knowledge. Not only this, but it also stops the movement of knowledge. 1005. In it union comes to perfection, the atom of joy is dissolved, and ultimately it remains in the form of a zero, nothing at all. 1006 To be absorbed in that element of Brahma, and to obtain the state of Brahma, depends upon a proper time. 1007-1008 When dishes full of the six juices are served before a hungry person, every morsel of that food brings him satisfaction, in the same way, when the light of knowledge becomes brighter with the help of indifference to

worldly things, the hidden store of self manifestation is open before him.

## 51 The Acquisition Of Brahma

*By being linked with complete purity by courageously controlling the body and its tendencies, by abandoning all objects both of love and hate*

1009-1010 Now I will explain to you the characteristic of the person who is endowed with the acquisition of such authority as will enable him to experience the glory of self-manifestation and also the order by which he attains the glory of the acquisition of Brahma. 1011 He arrives at the holy water of thoughtfulness by the guidance of his guru, and there cleanses away the impurity of his mind. 1012. Then just as the light, escaped from the jaws of *Rāhū* (darkness) embraces the moon in the same manner the intellect of that man which is so cleansed clings to the form of self. 1013 Just as a faithful wife leaves her mother's and her father in law's house, and follows her husband so his intellect leaves the dualities of joy and pain and is solely given up to the meditation of self. 1014 The five pleasures of sense, viz sound, touch, etc. which are made so much of by the organs of sense with the hope of the acquisition of knowledge. 1015 these also vanish, just as at the withdrawal of the rays of the sun the mirage vanishes. 1016. He makes the organs of sense vomit the pleasures of sense and their desire, just as one vomits the food of a mean person eaten unknowingly. 1017 Then he brings these organs on the holy and spiritual ground, and cleanses them by a proper penance. 1018 Then he cleanses the organs with the intrepidity of the *satva* (goodness) quality and by means of yoga unites them with his mind. 1019 In the same manner when he has to enjoy the fruit of his good or bad actions done in his former births, he does not hate the experience of the fruit of bad actions. 1020 nor does he cherish a special desire, if an occasion arrives for the enjoyment of the fruit of good actions.



1021. In the same manner, O Kīrītī, he gives up hatred or anger for favourable or unfavourable enjoyments, and goes to reside in the cave of a mountain or in a forest unhaunted by men'

## 52. The Ascetic In Solitary Meditation

*'One who has full self-control, who is given to meditation, who enjoys solitude, and who is an ascetic'*

1022. 'He inhabits a forest which is away from human uproar with the multitude of his sense organs only. 1023. His game is in the restraint of his organs of sense and mind; silence is his talk, and he has not time to think of any other thing aside from meditation on his *guru's* instructions. 1024. That his body should gain strength, or his hunger should be quenched, or the cravings of his tongue should be satisfied, 1025. this is not his care at the time of dining. His diet is measured, but his satisfaction is without measure. 1026. He eats only as much food as would keep up his life, for fear that the gastric fire which digests the food, if not fed, would destroy life. 1027. And like a woman born of a respectable family does not yield to the lustful wish of another person, so he does not let his posture change by yielding himself to sleep or sloth. 1028. If there is an occasion for prostration, he will touch the ground with his body, but never out of thoughtlessness will he touch it to enjoy sleep at any time. 1029. He uses his hands and feet, only to keep his body in action. In short he has in his power his mind and the outer limbs. 1030. O hero, how will that one encourage actions such as talk and walk, who does not allow the feelings of his mind even to touch the boundary of his mind? 1031. In this manner does one act who keeps in his possession the space of meditation by overpowering the body, speech and mind, 1032 just as by holding a looking-glass before him one can see clearly his form in it, so through the knowledge gained from his *guru* he determines his own knowledge to self. 1033. The

way of his meditation is such that he sees the aggregate, viz., the meditator, the object of meditation, and the meditation, just in himself 1034 O Son of Pandu (Arjun), there the aggregation of the object of meditation, the meditator and the meditation are to be forgotten and only meditation is to be observed until the form alone remains. 1035 Therefore the one desirous of salvation is attentive to self knowledge and gives *yoga* the pre-eminence. 1036. Dhananjay, he practises the *mūlbandha* posture, pressing the middle part of the anus and male organ by the heel. 1037 Contracting the lower part he unites the three postures, viz. *Mūlbandha* *Odhiyānabandha* and *Jālandharabandha* by destroying the differences of the wind with the help of these three. 1038 In this way when the five vital airs are restrained *Kundalinī* wakes up, and then *Madhyamā* i. e. the path of *Sushumnā* becomes clear and goes up by destroying the vital airs from the *Ādhāra* cycle to *Ādnyā* cycle. 1039 And from the cloud in the form of the thousand petalled lotus in the aperture of the crown of the head showers nectar and the stream of it flows through the *Sushumna* pulse, and reaches the *Mūlbandha*. 1040 Then *khichadi* (rice and split pulse boiled together) of the mind and wind is served in the earthen plate of Bhairava as the essential motivity in the space at the aperture in the crown of the head. 1041 In this way he determines his meditation behind the potent multitude of the *yoga* practices. 1042. And before the two, viz., meditation and *yoga* reach without hindrance the destination of self knowledge, 1043 the great friend viz., the indifference to worldly things which he has acquired accompanies the seeker after spiritual riches at every stage he reaches. 1044 If a light accompanies us until we reach the object of sight, then what delay can there be in seeing it? 1045 In this way if the seeker of salvation is accompanied by indifference to worldly things until he is absorbed in the essence of the supreme *Brahma*, then what hindrance can there possibly be in the

attainment of salvation? 1046. Therefore the fortunate man is fit for self-knowledge who studies it with the help of indifference. 1047. Thus he who wears an adamant proof-armour of indifference, rides on a horse of royal yoga, 1048 and he wields effectively by the hand of thoughtfulness the sword of meditation to ward off whatever he sees, great or small. 1049 And in this manner, as the sun enters darkness without fear, so he also enters the battlefield of the earthly life to wed the glory of success to the form of salvation.'

### 53. The Battlefield Of The Earthly Life

*'One who has given up self-assertion, force, pride, lust, anger and the sense of possession, who has lost all sense of "mine" and has attained to peace, he is worthy of becoming Brahma.'*

1050. 'There he kills the wicked enemies who had come to oppose him. Amongst these, personal egoism is the chief. 1051. It does not finish with a man by killing him off, nor let him live happily after birth. It makes him linger in a state of suffering by confining him in a cage of the body. 1052. He breaks into the bodily fort which is the place of residence of egoism, and makes it his own, and in the same way, oh hero, he destroys his second enemy, viz., power. 1053. This enemy in the form of power as soon as it hears the name of sensual pleasures grows fourfold, and does not let the world think of other things, and thereby a state of death is created to the world. 1054. That enemy in the form of power is the deep store of poison in sensual pleasures, and is the king of all wicked things. But how will it bear the stroke of the sword of meditation? 1055 Pride feels joyful when it gets the pleasures of sense, and with the same joy it overcomes a man. 1056 It leads one astray from the good path, and leaving him in the wilderness of unrighteousness, throws him to the mercy of the tigers as into hell. 1057 Pride, the enemy that destroys faith in a guru, is itself destroyed; therefore performers of austerities tremble:

1058 the result of this is seen in the great fault of anger which if encouraged only increases 1059 when sensual desire is overcome, it includes anger also. 1060 Just as when the roots of a tree are destroyed, the branches are also so when sensual desire is destroyed anger is destroyed 1061 Therefore when the enemy sensual desire, has disappeared the going and coming of anger also comes to an end 1062 And just as the king wags his head in approval at one who picks up the gauntlet, so the enemy *parigraha* (desire to possess) inspires men to that thought. 1063 This *parigraha* the moment it hears of indifference to earthly things, wags its head in approval of what it is going to do, and entering into the man who wishes for indifference, creates a fault in him and gets him entangled in such thoughts as "this is mine." 1064 This *parigraha* puts him into the snare of thinking "this hermitage is mine. These disciples and followers are mine. These books are my production 1065 Even if he leaves home and family and goes in the jungle, the idea of possession does not leave him. Even if he wanders entirely naked, still he is caught in the same snare. 1066 Therefore the man who completely overcomes this enemy *parigraha* which is most difficult to overcome, he has the joy of having overcome the difficulties of this earthly life. 1067 To meet with him a limitless number of assemblies of knowledge and qualities come as if they were all the kings from the land of eternal life 1068. And true knowledge, which is a universal kingdom offering itself to this seeker after salvation becomes his follower 1069 And as he walks on the royal road of this earthly existence, three young women in the form of the three conditions (wakefulness sleep and dreamless sleep) cast an enchantment to prevent his sight. 1070 Before him in the form of experimental knowledge there walks an officer who carries a golden mace, and breaks up the crowd of visible things, and austerities come before him waving with songs of praise. 1071 The *riddhis* and *siddhis* (accomplishments) coming together, he bathes in the shower of flowers

which they strew. 1072. And as in this way his freedom in unity with Brahma comes near, he sees the three worlds filled with joy. 1073. Dhananjay, there is no temptation left to him to say, "This is my enemy, this is my friend" 1074. In fact there is nothing which he can call his own because he has become non-dual himself. 1075 Son of Pandu, having embraced all the universe, there being no room left for saying "this is mine," the idea of ownership is put far away 1076 In this way having conquered pride and all such enemies, the whole world is himself, and with this thought the speed of the horse in the form of austerities is naturally stopped 1077. And then for a time he loosens the armour in the form of indifference to earthly things 1078 And there being nothing for the sword of meditation to destroy, the hand of the holder of the sword drops its hold. 1079 Just as a pure drug disappears after it has completed its work of healing, 1080. and just as when a goal is reached, all movement is stopped, so when the Brahma state is reached the attempt to reach it automatically ceases 1081. Just as the Ganges loses its flow when it reaches the ocean, or just as when a young woman meets her husband her desires become quieted. 1082 Just as when the banana bears fruit its growth stops, or as the road ends when it reaches a town. 1083. So when a man sees he is approaching the site of realizing his *ātma* condition, the tools which he used to attain it slowly fall to the ground. 1084. Therefore, Dhananjay, at the time when the union with Brahma takes place, all the means he has used leave him. 1085. As in the time of a noisy wedding, indifference to earthly things brings peace, or as the ripe means used in the form of knowledge, or as the fruitage of fruit in the form of austerities, 1086 such peace, O Arjun, he possesses in its entirety, and then that man becomes able to be Brahma. 1087 Whatever lack there may be in the phases of the moon on the 14th day before the full moon; or whatever is the lack in fifteen annas as compared with sixteen, 1088 and just as when the Ganges empties in the ocean, it is the Ganges, so

long as its flow is seen but after it has stopped it is the ocean  
 1089 such is the difference between Brahma and one about to  
 obtain Brahma. When peace is attained that difference dis-  
 appears. 1090. He who has the experience of having been  
 Brahma before he becomes so, has the proper qualification for  
 being Brahma.

#### 54. One Who Has Attained Brahma

*One who has attained Brahma and whose "ātmā" has joy he neither mourns nor desires. He regards all creatures as alike and he attains to supreme devotion to Me.*

1091 Son of Pandu, he who has acquired the qualification of being Brahma sits in the seat of those who have the joy of the knowledge of the *ātmā* 1092 The fire by which food is cooked, loses its heat just as the food becomes agreeable. 1093 Just as in the autumn the Ganges loses its turmoil of floods, or as when the concert is ended there remains nothing but the applause 1094 in the same way the effort made for the attainment of the knowledge of the *ātmā* has the joy of the unity with Brahma. 1095 The condition in which there is no recollection of the effort to attain it is called the joy of the knowledge of the *ātmā* O Arjun, that is the man who is worthy of enjoying that happiness. 1096. And when there is the fulness of the idea of unity with Brahma, then there is no such thing as mourning over the loss of anything or desiring anything 1097 When the sun has arisen all the stars lose their brilliance. 1098 So, O Parth, when there is the experience of the *ātmā* then when looking at the various things of the universe the differences vanish and the non-duality of things appears. 1099 Letters on a slate can be wiped out, and by a man's non-dual sight all differences and all non duality can be wiped out. 1100 By that means the waking and the sleeping states, which carry with them false knowledge, are both lost in the ignorance which disappears. 1101 And that ignorance as true knowledge increases, gradually disappears in that full knowledge;

1102. just as in eating, hunger gradually diminishes, until at the last mouthful when satisfied it entirely ceases. 1103. In the effort of walking, the distance becomes less, until on arriving at one's destination the road entirely ceases. 1104. When a man gradually becomes awake, his sleepiness gradually ceases, and when he is fully awake his sleepiness entirely disappears. 1105. At full moon, when the moon is full, it ceases to increase in light and the bright half of the fortnight comes to an end. 1106. In the same way as the things to be known gradually become less and in the place of full knowledge, knowledge itself disappears, and when it attains the unity with Brahma all ignorance disappears. 1107. When in the final age the whole world is covered with water, the difference between the rivers and sea ceases, and even as far as Brahma itself there is nothing but water. 1108. When jars and the like are removed, which make separate spaces, then at once there remains but one space, or when the wood has ceased to burn there is nothing left but fire. 1109. Or as when many kinds of ornaments are melted in the crucible, then the name and form of the ornament disappears and gold alone remains. 1110. Illustrations apart, what happens is that when a man awakes, his dream disappears, and all that is left is himself. 1111. Therefore what is left to him is simply Myself, and this, O Arjun, is called the fourth *bhakti*, and that *bhakti* he receives. 1112. I am naming this the fourth *bhakti* simply because I have before My mind the three other types of *bhakti* by which I am worshipped, viz, by those in difficulty, by those who are seeking Me, and by aspirants after prosperity. 1113. Superficially considered, this *bhakti* is neither third nor fourth, neither first nor last, but this name is given to unity with Me (Brahma). 1114. That (sense of unity) illumines the ignorance about Me, it leads people to misconceive Me as the world, and yet it influences them to worship Me in their own ways, and this brings consolation to them. 1115. The *bhakta* who thus thinks

he sees Me in that form does so through that light. 1116 Just as to one the falseness or truth of a dream appears so the rise or ending of the universe appears. 1117 O *hapidhwaj* this light cast upon Me is called the best form of *bhakti*. 1118 So in the *bhakta* who has desires he himself becomes the desire, and the things which he desires those things also become *bhakti*. 1119 Before the one seeking knowledge, O hero, his *bhakti* becomes the desire for knowledge, and I am shown as the object of knowledge to be known. 1120 O Arjun, this *bhakti* being itself the thing sought the means of attaining it and the one who desires it, these three give Me the name of the thing sought. 1121 In this way taking ignorance and turning it into devotion to Me who am its witness it makes Me an object that can be seen. 1122 There is no question about the same face being seen in a mirror and yet the mirror makes an illusory image. 1123 To a clear vision there is one moon only but by the disease of the eye it will look double. 1124 In that same way by this *bhakti* I know every thing to be experienced by Myself but as all things visible are illusory, My visibility is illusory through ignorance. 1125 That ignorance has now gone by means of *bhakti* visibility and Myself have become one, just as the face and the reflection become one. 1126. When there is an alloy placed in gold, the gold itself is pure, but when the alloy is removed only pure gold remains. 1127 Previous to the full moon, is not the moon complete in all its parts? But as on that day its fullness is completed. 1128 so I appear Myself by means of true knowledge but there is a difference in the point of view. When that is removed I attain to Myself. 1129 Therefore, O Parth, this practice of *bhakti* which is different from the visible practice of *bhakti* is called the fourth form of the practice of *bhakti*.

### 55 The Ministry Of Bhakti

*By this bhakti he understands how great I am and that I am and knowing Me thus after that he enters into Me.*



1130. 'When by this *bhakti* through knowledge, the *bhakta* becomes one with Me, he is simply Me, this you have already heard 1131. For, Kapidhwaj, with lifted arms I have already said in the seventh chapter that the man with true knowledge is My soul 1132 Dhananjay, at the beginning of the age, using the *Bhāgavata* as My instrument I preached this same doctrine to Brahmadev 1133. The wise give to this *bhakti* the name *svasanvitī*, the Shaivites call it *shakti*, but we ourselves call it supreme *bhakti* 1134. This *bhakti*, at the time that the practiser of actions becomes one with Me, develops into results, and then that knowledge makes it that I fully pervade everything. 1135 Then *vairāgya* disappears with thought itself, and bondage and deliverance vanish, and earthly existence is drowned. 1136. By this *bhakti*, such a conception as this side and that side disappears, just as space remains after pervading the four elements. 1137 Thus, the two sides and middle disappearing, I am beyond the idea of what is to be attained, the means of attaining, and an attainer, so becoming one with Me he enjoys Me 1138 As when the Ganges meets the ocean, that is when the Ganges mingles with the ocean, so such a one enjoys Me. 1139 When two mirrors are cleaned and placed opposite one another, each one has the pleasure of seeing the other, so does it happen to one who enjoys Me. 1140 But when the mirrors are taken away, and the reflection of the man's face is also gone, he merely enjoys his own simple self 1141. When a man is awaked from sleep his dreams disappear, and then he sees his oneness without any duality 1142 A critic of this may say, "When unity is acquired, how can it be enjoyed?" But I reply How can a word be pronounced through a word? 1143 But perhaps the critic is accustomed to look at the sun with the light of a lamp! Or perhaps he builds a pavilion for universal space! 1144. A king who has no kingly power, how can he know what a king with kingly instincts can enjoy? Or can darkness embrace the sun? 1145. That which is not

space, how can it understand what space is? And how can a red berry match ornaments of jewels? 1146 Therefore he who has not become of My form how can he know where I am? And how can it be said that he worships Me? 1147 When one who practises yoga becomes Me he can enjoy Me just as a youth enjoys his youthfulness. 1148 The ripples of water on every side kiss the water. Light everywhere delights in the sun and space pervades the sky. 1149 So without action he worships Me as ornaments worship the gold. 1150 The fragrance of the sandalwood worships the sandalwood. And the light of the moon is ever with the moon. 1151 One who is non-dual in thought cannot endure the thought of actions and yet there is *bhakti* in non duality of thought which is to be learned from experience and cannot be expressed in words. 1152 Whatever through the effects of former births such a man calls I give an answer but the one who speaks is Myself. 1153 To such a one who calls to Me I answer immediately he will then not call on Me as he did before, and his silence is his best worship. 1154 Therefore when such an one calls, I who answer while being silent by that very silence I am worshipped. 1155 So, O Kṛitī that intellect or sight that will know or see the object of knowing or seeing being put aside shows the knower or seer himself. 1156 When looking at a mirror the face is seen rather than the mirror the result of looking is to see himself. 1157 When the object to be seen disappears and the person who looks assumes the form of the looker then through that unity the very law of looking does not remain. 1158 As in a dream a man awakens a woman and lovingly embraces her both the embracer and the woman embraced are not existing and so the man only remains (when he awakes). 1159 When two sticks are rubbed together the fire that is created burns both sticks destroying the very name of wood and becomes itself. 1160 When the sun takes its reflection in its hands, the reflection disappears, and with it the power of reflection. 1161 So he

who becomes of My form, he has no other object, and the very power of looking disappears 1162. When the sun throws its light into the darkness, the object of sight disappears as well as the law of seeing, and becomes Myself 1163. The seeing or not seeing that condition being gone, then the real seeing of Me takes place 1164. O Kṛitī, such a person meets with any object, then with a sight which is outside the duality of object, seen and seer, he always enjoys Me 1165. Like space that pervades everything and therefore is unmovable, so I the *ātmā* pervade everything and am Myself alone 1166. At the end of the ages, because water fills everything, its flow ceases, so the universe being pervaded by Me alone there remains nothing but Me 1167. Can the feet climb up on the feet? Can fire burn fire? Can water bathe in water? 1168. Therefore as I pervade everything, a man's movements of going and coming come to an end, and his non-dual attitude is his wandering on pilgrimages 1169. As the waves of the ocean move with speed, yet they do not forsake water for land, 1170 because of the place the waves leave and of the place to which they go, and because the mover and the mover's means are simply water 1171. Wherever the waves may go, O Son of Pandu, being water they do not lose their oneness of being water. 1172. So having become of My form, although he may have the thought of individuality, still by his pilgrimage to Me he becomes My pilgrim. 1173. And whatever he does through the bodily instincts I meet with him. 1174. O Son of Pandu, the difference between action and doer disappears, and seeing Me from the point of view of *ātmā*, he becomes of My form 1175. Just as when a mirror looks into a mirror there is no seeing, or when gold is covered by gold the gold is not covered 1176. When a light lightens up another light it is really no lighting up at all. So he who becomes of My form, how can the actions he performs be called actions? 1177. When he performs an action, and the pride of being the doer having vanished, then all actions become no actions

1178 As all his actions become in the form of *ātma* all his actions must be called no actions, and that in itself is the worship of My secret quality 1179 Therefore, Kapidhwaṃ since what he does is as if not performed that itself is the greatest worship of Me 1180 Therefore whatever he says is My praise whatever he sees is the seeing of Me, and I the non dual one am his pilgrimage wherever he goes 1181 Kapidhwaṃ whatever he does is My worship, whatever thoughts he may have they are the repetition of My name, and in whatever condition he may be that is My real condition. 1182 As the golden bracelet is to the gold so by his *bhakti* he is devoted to Me alone. 1183 As ripples on water as fragrance with camphor as the brightness of jewels are not different from each 1184 like the oneness of the threads and the cloth and as the clay and the jar so My *bhakti* is one with Me. 1185 Wise Arjun, this whole-hearted *bhakti* is the means by which in all objects of sense he recognises Me as the *ātma* that is the witnesser 1186. By means of the three conditions (wakefulness sleep and dreamless sleep) and by means of the body and the mover of the body all objects are conceived as visible or invisible 1187 Wise Arjun all that can be seen is Myself and the banner of experience waves in the flow of knowledge. 1188. When the rope is recognized the illusion as to its being a snake disappears and then the conviction is certain that it is a rope 1189 When the conviction is that there can be no ornament aside from gold even so small as a *gunf* seed all the ornaments come in that conception. 1190 When the conviction is certain that there can be no ripples on water without water then he is not deceived by their form. 1191 On awakening after a dream one discovers on reflection that the material of the dream was nothing but oneself 1192 Similarly the man enjoys the experiences of realizing the fact that whatever leads to knowledge be it by means of presence or of absence, it is none other than Myself 1193 He regards himself as unborn and free from old age, as indestructible and

imperishable, as unpreceled by anything, as followed by nothing, and as ever joyful. 1194. immovable and unchangeable, unfallen and endless, the source of all, and both with and without any form. 1195. the controller of everything and the ruler of all, eternal, immortal and fearless, able the support and that which is supported. 1196. the Lord of all and eternally existing, the self-existent and immortal one, the omnipresent one and the one who is beyond everything. 1197. the new and old in every one, non-existent in form but perfect, greatest of all yet smaller than the smallest atom. 1198. I free from all effort and alone, free from all association and from sorrow, yet all things rest in Me and I am the Supreme Being. 1199. I am beyond sound or hearing, without appearance or race, the same everywhere and free, both Brahma and the Supreme Brahma. 1200. Thus attaining to spiritual unity, by this unrivalled devotion he comes to know Me and to identify himself with Me the Supreme Spirit. 1201. Just as on awaking, all the illusions of dreamland disappear, and the dreamer is all alone and becomes aware of the fact, 1202. and just as the sun by rising reveals itself as both the illuminator and the illumined, 1203. so also when all the objects of knowledge disappear, the knower alone is left and recognises himself. 1204. Dhananjay, the knowledge attaining to this identity is none other than God, and the man attaining to it knows himself as God. 1205. When this knowledge has merged into experience, then a man knows without doubt that he is that Self or Spirit which is beyond all idea of duality or of non-duality. 1206. A man realizes what he is just after awaking from a dream, but he is unable to describe his solitary waking consciousness. 1207. When the goldsmith looks at golden ornaments, he sees the gold in them even without melting them. 1208. When salt is dissolved in water it still remains salt, but when the salt water dries up, the salt itself disappears. 1209. So in the very same way, all difference

between I and 'Thou' disappears in the ecstasy of becoming merged in Me. 1210 When all sense of otherness has vanished how can the word 'I' survive? When he has become one with Me there is neither I nor Thou. 1211 When camphor has burned out, the fire that burned it is no more; then what is left is only empty space which is neither camphor nor fire. 1212 When one is subtracted from one the remainder is zero; so also when existence is subtracted from non-existence 'I' alone am left. 1213 At such a time any talk about the all-pervading God as the only Ruler of the Universe loses all its meaning and in such a case no room is left for 'not talking'. 1214 The best course is that of 'not having spoken at all' (or 'silence is golden') and in the same way knowledge comes after having given up knowledge and ignorance. 1215 Knowledge should be gained by knowledge; joy should be experienced by joy; happiness should be experienced by being quite full of happiness. 1216 Then profit gets profit; light embraces light; wonder is completely immersed in wonder. 1217 There peace gets peace; rest obtains rest; and experience becomes limited by experience. 1218 Not only so, but by making use of the beautiful vine of the *karma yoga* (or the path of duty and action) one gets fruit by which he attains to his true nature, the splendid fruit of being absorbed in Me. 1219 Oh Kintī (Arjun) I become the crown-jewel as understanding in the crown of the paramount king as the practiser of the way of works, and that jewel adds beauty to My crown. 1220 Or it can be said that a practiser of the way of works becomes the expanse of the space of the dome on the temple of salvation. 1221 Or he enters My town as My union, by the royal road of the way of works through the forest of earthly life. 1222 Not only this. This Ganges of devotion and understanding flows through the stream of the way of works, and joins Me, the joy-ocean. 1223 Oh Arjun of acute intellect such is the glory of this way of works, and therefore, I often and often describe it to you.

1224 But I am not attainable by the favour of place, time and environment. As I am the soul of every one, I am obtainable by every one. 1225 So, aside from any special effort I am obtainable very easily by way of works. 1226 In order to understand the means of obtaining Me, the institution of a *guru* and a disciple is in existence from time immemorial. 1227. Oh Kīriti, the interior of the earth is full of riches, for example, that there is fire in wood and milk in the udders are matters well known. 1228 But although these are established facts, to know the facts, efforts are required. But as for Me, I am self-existent, therefore an endeavour is needed to remove what bars the way to Me. 1229 Here if one might entertain a doubt as to why Shrī Krishna should introduce the means after the attainment of the fruit, he must know what God meant to say, 1230 i.e., that the *Gītā* has the power to give the means of salvation which are good. Other *shāstras* do not speak of means from evidence. 1231 The wind can drive away the clouds which come across the sun, but it cannot create the sun. The hand can remove the moss on water, but it cannot create water, for this is spontaneous. 1232 In the same way, other *shāstras* can remove the impurity caused by ignorance across the sight of the soul, but they are not able to create my clear soul-form, for that is spontaneous. 1233. Therefore, all *shāstras* are only able to destroy ignorance. They cannot explain the spontaneous soul. 1234 If one questions the truth of these principles of spirit, the *shāstra* to which they will go to prove their truth is the *Gītā*. 1235 When the sun lights the east, every direction is lighted, in the same way all *shāstras* are supported by the *Gītā*, the highest of all *shāstras*. 1236 In brief, this highest *shāstra* of the *Gītā* has given many means to conquer the soul in the previous chapters'. 1237 But Shrī Hari had a doubt whether Arjun would understand it by hearing it only once, therefore, being anxious, 1238 the same meaning he repeated in order that it should make a firm impression on his disciple.

1239 And as the occasion is the conclusion of the *Gītā*, therefore from beginning to end only one meaning is set forth  
 1240 In the middle of the work on many important occasions, many established facts are explained  
 1241 If one thinks that many established facts are explained in the *Gītā* without regard to any previous connection  
 1242 then he should know that the *Gītā* has been concluded which began from the union of the established truths with many other minor established truths.  
 1243 In the science of the *Gītā* the destruction of ignorance is the prime factor and the gain of salvation is its fruit and to accomplish these two things, knowledge is the only means.  
 1244 The same knowledge is repeated in the book in various ways, and, therefore, the book is enlarged and just in order to explain the same knowledge in short,  
 1245 Lord Shri Krishna was ready to repeat the explanation, although the thing which was to be had with great efforts was already possessed

## 56 The Practiser Of The Way Of Works

*He who does all his work at all times by taking refuge in Me completely (in mind act and speech) he by My grace attains to the eternal and imperishable state.*

1246. Then God said, O great warrior the practiser of the way of works with this devotion has My form and is absorbed in it.  
 1247 By worshipping Me with the beautiful flowers in the form of the practice of works, he obtains the favour of fixedness of devotion.  
 1248. Great devotion of Me becomes mature in him who is in possession of that devotion of knowledge. And he enjoys happiness by union with Me by worshipping Me in accordance with that devotion.  
 1249 And he has followed Me, the soul and the light of the world with entire devotion  
 1250 When salt gives away its quality and yields to water it turns to water. The wind moves in the space, but eventually is united with the space.  
 1251 In the same manner one who takes refuge in Me with his intellect,



body, speech and mind, may do an action. forbidden by religion, 1252 still he is not touched by the good or bad action, just as a great river or a polluted stream have the form of the Ganges after joining it 1253. The difference between the sandalwood and ordinary wood exists only until they are in contact with fire 1254 Or the difference between the pure and inferior gold exists only until they are touched by the touchstone 1255 So the difference as auspicious and inauspicious exists only while My light has not reached every quarter 1256. As long as the sun has not risen in a town, until then only there will be the difference between night and day 1257 Therefore, O Kīrītī, in meeting Me all his actions vanish, then he ascends the throne of the Supreme Spirit 1258 He obtains that position of Mine which is free from destruction in regard to country, time or nature 1259 In brief, O Son of Pandu, what gain can there be in the world greater than of obtaining Me as the favour of the soul ?'

## 57 Resignation And Concentration

*'Dedicating mentally all deeds to Me, aiming at Me as thy highest goal, using all thy powers of concentration, fix thy mind always on Me'*

1260 'Therefore, oh Dhananjay, resign all your actions to Me 1261 But, oh hero, that resignation must not be external. It must be in thought and mind 1262 Then through the power of that thought, you will see the clear form in Me which is beyond action 1263 And you will also notice that the birthplace of all actions, namely, ignorance (illusion), is far from you 1264. Then, Dhananjay, you will see that ignorance is not distinct from people, just as a shadow is not apart from a form 1265 Then there is a natural resignation when ignorance is destroyed with this understanding. 1266 And when through ignorance the assumption of action on the soul is vanished by thought, I remain in My *ātmā* form In that *ātmā* make

your intellect steady as a faithful wife. 1267 When the intellect rests in Me by this exclusive thought, then the mind leaves the things which deserve meditation, and worships Me. 1268. So give up those objects of meditation and quickly form your mind so that it will stick firmly in Me

## 58 The Reward Of Concentration On God

*By concentrating thy mind on Me by My grace thou shalt be saved from all the troubles caused by deaths and rebirths but if through pride thou dost not hear Me thou wilt be destroyed*

1269 When in this way your mind is absorbed in Me by undivided service, you will then have My complete favour know this well. 1270 Then those births and deaths which are the homes of pain and difficult to pass through and which all beings have got to experience, you will find easy 1271 Of what value is darkness when the sight is aided by sunlight? 1272. So he whose being is destroyed by My favour can he have any fear from the hobgoblin of earthly life? 1273 There fore, oh Dhananjay (Arjun) you will get over this ugly state of earthly life by My favour 1274 But If you do not listen to all this advice of Mine through pride or do not remember it, 1275 still although you enjoy the state of eternal salvation and are incapable of destruction, all that will be in vain and you will have to experience the blows connected with the body 1276. In this bodily connection there is destruction at every step and in experiencing it there is no rest at all. 1277 If you will not listen to what I say then the dreadful death will not be destroyed, but you will have to experience it.

## 59 Why Arjun Shrinks From Fighting And Krishna's Reply

*If in pride thou dost say "I will not fight this resolve will be in vain thy very nature (as a kshatriya) will prevent thee from acting contrary to it*

1278 'As dislike for indigestible food increases fever, or hatred for light will increase darkness, so by the hatred of thought, egoism will increase 1279 Then you will call your own body as Arjun, and those of others as your relations, and to fight against them will be a sin 1280 Dhananjay, although your mind will call three different things by three different names, 1281 and although you determine in your mind not to fight, still your natural disposition will not let your determination stand. 1282 When thoughtfully considered, the idea that you are Arjun, that those before you are relatives, that to kill them is a sin—are these ideas free from illusion and therefore true? 1283 At first you were ready to fight, and took a weapon to fight, so is it now right to swear not to fight? 1284. Therefore, it is useless to say that you will not fight. And even public opinion will not accept your statement. 1285. The determination that you will not fight will be in vain, for your own warlike nature, on the contrary, is sure to compel you to fight'

## 60 Arjun's 'Kshatriya' Disposition Cannot Evade The Fight

*'O Son of Kuntī, completely bound as thou art by the "Karma" of thy own (Kshatriya) disposition, that which thou dost not want to do on account of delusion thou wilt be compelled to do in spite of thyself'*

1286 'If a stream of water is flowing eastward, and if a swimmer happens to say that he will swim westward, then his saying will be in vain, and he will be carried by the force of the stream. 1287 Or if a grain of paddy should say that it will not grow as paddy, it will be in vain, for how will it be possible for it to go against its nature? 1288. So, oh you awakened one, since your nature is of warlike quality, it will be useless to say that you will not fight. Your warlike nature itself will compel you to fight. 1289 O Son of Pandu, your nature with the warlike qualities such as

bravery heroic lustre and ability are born with you 1290  
 Dhananjay following the nature of this quality you cannot  
 but fight. 1291 Oh wielder of the Kodanda Bow you are  
 tied by these warlike qualities, and you cannot go against your  
 own nature. 1292. And though you firmly determine not to  
 fight, without regard to your nature, 1293 still as a person  
 bound hand and foot is placed on a chariot and is carried to the  
 farthest extremity even if he is determined not to walk, 1294  
 so even if you sit quietly saying that you will do nothing still  
 there is no doubt that you will fight. 1295 When the cows  
 of Virāta were stolen by Kauravas and when prince Uttara, son  
 of King Virāta, was hastily retreating you became his charioteer  
 in female garb did you not fight then? That warlike nature of  
 yours cannot but make you fight. 1296 Oh holder of the  
 Bow in that battle you stripped eleven hundred trillion great  
 warriors of their clothes. This very warlike nature of yours  
 will make you fight. 1297 Just see. Does a sick person like  
 a disease? Does a poor man like poverty? But it is an  
 all powerful fate which makes them yield to these. 1298  
 And as fate is in the hand of God, it will not act against  
 Him. And that God lives in your heart.

## 61 God The Source Of Action

*O Arjun, the Lord abides in the hearts of all beings  
 and as if He were seated on a machine He causes by His  
 "māyā" all beings to move*

1299 The heart of all beings is as it were, the great  
 space, and in it the sun of knowledge has risen with his  
 thousands of rays 1300 That sun as God has, as it were,  
 lighted the three worlds as wakefulness, dream and dreamless  
 sleep and has awakened the travellers as beings who had gone  
 astray by wrong knowledge. 1301 In the lake of the visible  
 world there are the full blown lotuses of sense objects, and the  
 divine sun causes bees as beings with six feet, to enjoy the  
 lotuses by the five sense organs and the sixth the mind

1302. Let this metaphor of the sun pass The God who lives in the hearts of all has covered Himself, as it were, with the egoism of all beings, and manifested Himself 1303. He sits behind the curtain of illusion, and there pulls the strings, and makes the eighty-four million pictures dance. 1304 He gives bodily form to all beings according to their authority, from the god Brahmadev to the lowest insect 1305 He rides the bodily machine, considering the body as Himself which he has according to His authority 1306 As a thread is tied by a thread, or as grass is tied by grass, or a child sees his own reflection in water, and<sup>1</sup> tries through delusion to catch it, considering it as itself, 1307. so, considering the bodily form as Himself, he becomes proud of it through misapprehension. 1308 In this manner God pulls the strings of the bodily machinery, having seated the beings on the machinery in the form of the bodies according to their previous actions 1309. Then each being obtains the course which is free according to its fate. 1310 O holder of the Bow, fate makes all beings wander in heaven and on earth, just as wind makes a blade of grass wander in space 1311. As through the power of the loadstone, iron moves, so through the power of God all beings act. 1312 O Dhananjay (Arjun), by the contact of the moon the movements of the ocean, etc, take place, 1313 the ocean has tides, the moon-stone exudes water, the lunar lotuses blow, and the *chakois* are glad 1314. So, through the power of the mighty original source of the material world God makes the beings act, and He is in your heart. 1315 O Son of Pandu (Arjun), the pride which rises in you, aside from the pride arising from your name as Arjun, is the true form of God 1316 Therefore, that God through the original force of the material world compels you to fight, even though you do not mean it 1317 Therefore, God is the Lord of all, and it is according to the nature which He bestows on beings that all organs act. 1318. Therefore, do not be proud of your actions. Understand all those actions are in the keep-

ing of nature, and that nature again is in the keeping of the Lord who is in every heart

## 62 Surrender Thyself Entirely

*O Bharat surrender thyself fully to that Lord By His grace thou shalt obtain the supreme peace and the eternal abode.*

1319 Dedicate thyself to God with thy egoism speech mind and body and supplicate Him just as the water of the Ganges supplicates the ocean, and is absorbed in it 1320 Then through the favour of that God thou wilt become the lord of the lady of peace, and through joy amuse thyself in the soul form of God 1321 That place is the cause of creation, the resting place of rest and the object of experience is experience 1322 Thou wilt be crowned as king of the soul and enjoy eternal happiness. So said the Husband of Lakshmi, Lord Śrī Krishna, to Parth.

## 63 The Profoundest Knowledge

*Thus have I declared to thee a knowledge deeper than all profundities therefore think over it and act as seems best to thee.*

1323. This knowledge is well known as the *Gītā* is the essence of all the Vedas, and is the means to possess the soul jewel 1324 that which is known as knowledge in philosophy and by describing which all the *śāstras* of the world have gained fame. 1325 The knowledge coming from reason, etc. is simply a reflection of the knowledge coming from self revelation and by the latter I the Seer of all am seen. 1326 This soul knowledge is the secret treasure of Myself who am secreted in all And although this knowledge is of such mighty importance how can it be secreted from you who are my great *bhakta*? 1327 Therefore, oh Pāṇḍav I have given you this secret treasure, being pleased with you through love. 1328 A mother forgets herself through the love of her child, and talks in love in

regard to it Such is my love for you, then how will it come in my way of giving this treasure to you? 1329 It is like an effort to strain the space which is the smallest of all, or to take off the skin of nectar which is sweet in and out, and to make an ordeal perform an ordeal, 1330 or like painting the eyes of the sun with black collyrium by whose light even the smallest atom is visible in the darkest corner. 1331 So, Dhananjay, I, the All-knowing, after thinking in every possible way, have explained that knowledge to you. 1332 Now you think this knowledge over, and determine, and after determination do what you like' 1333 After God had said this much, Arjun sat quiet Then God again addressed him and said, 'Well, I believe you will not deceive yourself 1334. If, as the server is serving food, the diner out of shyness says, "Quite sufficient," then he will have to suffer the pang of hunger, and also be charged with deceiving himself through being reserved 1335 In the same manner, when the all-knowing Shrī Guru is before you, and through reserve you do not ask Him to explain the soul-knowledge, 1336. then you will lose your gain, and be charged with the sin of deceiving yourself. 1337 Dhananjay, I guess your silence means that I should repeat the knowledge to you' 1338. Then Pārth (Arjun) replied, 'O Lord, you have really understood what I mean. Need I say this? Aside from you who is the knower? 1339. Aside from you the whole world is your object of knowing, and you alone know it. Where is the necessity of glorifying the sun by calling it the sun?' 1340 Hearing this speech of Arjun, Shrī Krishna then said, 'Am I to understand by what you say that what I said was not enough?'

#### 64. The Divine Secret Repeated

*'Listen again, therefore, to My profoundest secret Because thou art so dear to Me, I repeat it for thy benefit'*

1341 'Well, once more pay close attention, and hear My clear statement. 1342 It is not because this saying deserves

it that if should be talked of or heard but because you are fortunate, you have obtained it. 1343 O Dhananjay there is milk in the sight of a female tortoise for her young ones and there is water in the empty sky for the *chātak* birds ( both impossibilities ) 1344 Where an action does not take place, there the fruit only is obtained When fate is favourable, what is there that one will not gain ? 1345 How rare this secret is cannot be explained. This secret is that of leaving the idea of duality and enjoying living in the house of non-duality 1346; Oh the best of dear ones, this love of Mine is without formality and you have made yourself the object of it. Understand well that you are no other than My own self 1347 Dhananjay when the looking glass is cleansed again and again, it is not for its own good but because we should enjoy the happiness of looking at our face. 1348 So O Parth, making you the plea, I am in fact saying this for Myself. Is there any difference between you and Me ? 1349 And for this reason I tell you this secret, as you are My life. I am fond of *bhaktas* who follow Me exclusively 1350 O Son of Pandu, as salt wholly gives way to water and is not ashamed of becoming of its form 1351 so, as you have no difference from Me, then how can I conceal anything from you ? 1352 Therefore, listen to that secret of Mine before which all secrets are revealed.

## 65 God The Reward Of Full Surrender

*Fix thy mind on Me alone be My devotee sacrifice to Me and worship Me then shalt thou arrive at Me because of My love for thee I have made Thee this solemn promise.*

1353 O warlike Arjun, I am the All Pervader make over to Me as their object all your mental and bodily actions 1354 Do all your actions for Me, just as the wind is united with the space everywhere 1355 In brief make your mind My home, and listen to My qualities with your ears. 1356 The saints who are endowed with self knowledge are but My



forms. Fix your sight on them just as you might fix it on a fascinating woman. 1357. Let your tongue repeat My names so that they remain for ever, for I am the home of every creation. 1358. Surrender all actions of your hands and feet to Me. 1359. O Pāṇḍav, resign all your actions, whether they are for yourself or for others, and act as a sacrificer. 1360. Now how many things shall I explain to you singly? Think yourself to be the servant, and believing that whatever you see is nothing but My form, serve it. 1361. Then you will be free from hate of any being, you will see Me everywhere, and will humbly bow to everything. By this you will obtain My greatest support. 1362. Then without any third party you will see God and His *bhaktā* united in one. 1363. Then we shall enjoy each other in any state and at any time, and in this way happiness will grow naturally and abundantly. 1364. O Arjun, the third thing, viz., illusion about the earthly life, intervenes, and when it disappears, you will understand that there is no difference between you and Me, and therefore you will reach Me. 1365. When water is destroyed, what hindrance can there be to the reflection in it uniting itself with the original object? 1366. Is there any impediment for the wind to unite with the space, or the waves with the ocean? 1367. Therefore when the difference caused on account of different bodies passes away, you will be united with Me. 1368. Do not doubt this statement of Mine, and do not call it right or wrong. I swear by you that it is as I have said, and not otherwise. 1369. To swear by you is to swear by Myself, for affection is above shame. 1370. The Vedas have described God as without difference, and on account of His support the illusion of the world is felt as true, and the power of His command conquers Kāla (death or time). 1371. I am that truthful God, and the Father of the world, acting for its benefit. That being so, why should I insist on swearing? 1372. But oh Arjun, for the sake of your love I have cast aside My marks of divinity. By the attraction of your love I have

nearly become a human being and by the attraction of My love you have become perfectly divine. 1373 Dhananjay a king swears by himself to gain his own purpose, and it is like that. 1374 On that Arjun said God should not talk in this way Oh Lord by Your mere name all one's purpose is accomplished. 1375 Though this is so, You begin to describe and You swear in Your description. Oh Lord Your humour is without end. 1376 One ray of the sun is enough to blow open the lotuses. This being so, the sun gives its light to the world, making the lotuses its plea. 1377 The cloud showers water abundantly so as to quench the earth and fill up the sea, but for that shower the *chātak* bird is the plea. 1378 Then is it not true that I am made the plea for Your generosity? Oh Lord, oh Mine of Mercy the whole world will be benefitted by this Your gift of knowledge. 1379 Then God interrupted him and said, Stop, there is no occasion for this description of Me. But by this means you are sure to be identified with Me. 1380 Dhananjay the lump of salt soaks the moment it falls into the ocean Has it any reason to remain as a lump? 1381 In this manner you will obtain My form when you worship Me in every visible thing Then all your pride will vanish, and you verily will become Myself 1382 In this way beginning with action to the obtaining of My form I clearly have explained all the means to you. 1383 Oh Son of Pandu to begin with, if you make over to Me all your actions, you will obtain My entire favour 1384 And when you have that favour you will have knowledge of Me and thereby you will be united with My pure form 1385 Oh Pārth there the means and the object of accomplishment vanish. In brief you will have nothing to do. 1386 To-day you have obtained My favour as you have dedicated all your actions to Me. 1387 Therefore on account of that favour this battle does not become an impediment in the way of my giving you knowledge (of Myself) I am so attracted towards you by your love. 1388 By dint of that knowledge ignorance and earthly life

will vanish, and I alone will be visible That knowledge is the form of the *Gītā* in various ways. 1389 I have explained to you As you have that knowledge, give up ignorance entirely, for it is the main reason of right and wrong'

## 66 Self-Abandonment To God

*'Renounce all duties (righteous and unrighteous) surrender thyself to Me with thy whole heart, and I will release thee from all thy sins, grieve not'*

1390. 'Just as hope gives birth to pain, or censure gives rise to sin, or as bad luck creates poverty, 1391. so ignorance begets religion and non-religion which become the causes of heaven and hell Destroy that ignorance by this knowledge. 1392 As by holding a rope, one gives up the idea of a snake, or as after sleep one forgets the domestic and other affairs dreamed of, 1393. or as when jaundice leaves one, he does not see the moon as yellowish, or when disease leaves one, the bitterness of his mouth is no more felt, 1394 or just as a mirage disappears after sunset, or as by giving up of wood, fire also is given up, 1395. in the same manner, ignorance is the root indicative of religion and non-religion Give up that ignorance, and also give up all religions 1396 Then just as a dream passes away with sleep we remain alone, in the same manner, as ignorance disappears, naturally I alone remain 1397 Then aside from Myself there is nothing else. Then considering that as Myself, with that knowledge exclusively endow yourself 1398. To become My suppliant, means to know our oneness without difference. 1399. Just as when a jar breaks, the space in it is united with the great space (the sky), so yourself supplicate Me in union 1400. As gold beads supplicate gold, or a wave water, so Dhananjay, you supplicate Me. 1401 Oh Kīrītī, the submarine fire has taken refuge in the bosom of the ocean, still it burns it. Give up the talk of supplicating Me by living apart from Me. 1402 Away with talk of supplication to Me, and remaining as a

separate being at the same time. Why does the mind not feel shame for such talk? 1403 Dhananjay even should a king call a maid his, she becomes his equal in rank 1404 Then when one meets with Me, the Lord of the Universe what is the good of it, if the knot of life is not undone? Let not such ugly talk fall on your ears. 1405 The natural worship of Me is absorption in Me. Try to possess that natural devotion by this knowledge. 1406. Butter when once extracted from butter milk, is not again united with it. 1407 Iron if hung horizontally rusts. But the same turns to gold by the contact of a touchstone. It does not rust 1408 Well, let these illustrations pass. When fire is created by rubbing two pieces of wood against each other it can no more remain concealed in a wooden box. 1409 In the same manner if you put aside the sense of duality and come to Me as a suppliant, religion or non religion will not harm you 1410 Oh Arjun does the sun ever hear of darkness? Can there be the dream condition in wakefulness? 1411 So, after uniting with Me, the Pervader of all forms can there be anything aside from Myself? 1412. Therefore, be not at all anxious about religion and non religion. I Myself will become your good or bad action. 1413 Oh wise Arjun, when salt falls into water it turns to water so also you will become like Me, if you will heartily supplicate Me alone. 1414 To remain apart from Me is the bad action which ties one (to this earthly life) and that bad action will vanish in knowledge of Me. 1415 Dhananjay this is enough to make you free But I will free you entirely when you understand Me well 1416 Therefore have no anxiety in your heart any longer Oh wise Arjun supplicate Me alone. 1417 Shri Krishna, He who is beautiful on account of the beauty of every created form who has eyes on account of His possessing the eyes of every creature, and who lives in every place, He advised Arjun in this way 1418 Then Shri Krishna of beautiful dark complexion extended His right hand

with a bracelet on it and embraced His suppliant, Arjun, the king of *bhaktas*. 1419. Speech without reaching that place retreated along with intellect. 1420. God made His embrace the plea in order to give Arjun that which is unapproachable to speech and intellect. 1421. At the time of embrace the hearts of God and Arjun came together. God put into the heart of Arjun that knowledge stored in His own heart And God made Arjun like Himself without breaking the duality between God and His *bhakta*. 1422 The embrace was like the lighting of a lamp by another lamp. God gave Pārth His form without injury to duality. 1423 Dhananjay was overflowed with joy, and although God is so mighty, He also was overwhelmed. 1424 When one sea meets another sea the water is doubled and it leaps up to the sky. 1425. But who was to understand that neither of them could refrain himself from the embrace? In brief, Shrī Nārāyan entirely filled the universe 1426 Thus Shrī Krishna revealed the *Gītā Shāstra* which is the only holy place of all authorities, and the root of all the Vedas which is in the form of aphorisms 1427 If you should ask how the *Gītā* is the root of the Vedas, then I will skilfully explain it with its cause and effect. 1428. Shrī Krishna, who is true to His promise, and from whose breath the Vedas sprang up, has with His own lips explained the *Gītā Shāstra* with a promise. 1429. Therefore, it is right to say that the *Gītā* is the root of the Vedas There is another proof of this 1430 In the world it is called the seed whose form is not destroyed, but whose expansion is inwardly concealed 1431 Just as a tree is concealed in the seed, so the whole Veda is concealed in the, *Gītā* in three ways ( of works, devotion and knowledge ) 1432. Therefore I think that the *Gītā* is the root of Vedas, and it naturally so appears 1433 For just as with the jewels in ornaments the whole body is beautified, so three parts of the Vedas are clearly revealed in the *Gītā*. 1434. Now I will so explain the matter that your eyes may clearly see where the three parts of the Vedas as the way of works, devotion and

knowledge are to be found in the *Gītā* 1435 The first chapter is as an introduction of the *Gītā Shāstra* and in the second chapter the purport of the *sāṅkhya shāstra* is explained in brief. 1436. This *Gītā Shāstra* mainly treats of knowledge and freely dispenses salvation and the second chapter treats of only these in short. 1437 The third chapter explains the *Karma Mārga* the first means of salvation to men bound in ignorance. 1438 Men who are enslaved by the meshes of bodily egoism should give up actions with desires and prohibited by religion, and follow those which are right but they must perform these actions without mistakes. 1439 Thus actions should be performed with a sincere devotion And this decision given by God in the third chapter should be considered as the way of works in the *Gītā* 1440 And how does the performance of these daily works become the means of freedom from ignorance? 1441 When such a desire arises in the mind of a man desirous of salvation, God has recommended the way of works to be followed with the intention of making it over to the Supreme Brahma. 1442 God ordered the work which is right and which is to be done by body speech and mind for the favour of God 1443 How devotion to God is possible is explained in the conclusion of the fourth chapter 1444 How to worship God is explained from the conclusion of the fourth chapter to the conclusion of the eleventh chapter 1445 In these eight chapters of the *Gītā* the *Devatākāṇḍa* (devotion to God) is explained clearly by removing all hindrances 1446. It is experienced that the knowledge which one of devotion has as a favour of God and obtained from *Shrī Guru* as traditional handing down of instruction, is immature. 1447 How to make this immature knowledge mature is explained by section *Advēṣṭā* of chapter 12 and *Amānṣtvam* in chapter 13 and so we call it a chapter of *Dnyānakāṇḍa* (knowledge explained) 1448 In the four chapters beginning from the twelfth and ending with the fifteenth the theme the perfection of the fruit of knowledge is dealt with. 1449 Therefore, making chapter 15

which has the shloka 'Urdhvamūla' at its beginning as the last, in the four chapters from 12 to 15, *Dnyānakānda* is explained in the *Gītā*. 1450 In this way the *Gītā* is a beautiful form of the Vedas, explaining the three themes (of works, devotion, and knowledge) This miniature of the Vedas is adorned with the ornaments of jewels in the form of the *shlokas* of the *Gītā*. 1451. Let that pass. This *shruti* (the Vedas) in the form of the *Gītā*, contains the three themes and loudly proclaims that one should try to possess the fruit as salvation. 1452 The knowledge which is the means of salvation, and the multitude of human foes arising from ignorance which is ever in opposition to it (the knowledge), this is explained in the sixteenth chapter. 1453 That one should take with him the *shāstra* as his guide which will take him to his destination, and thereby enable him to conquer the multitude of enemies arising from ignorance, is the message of God delivered in the seventeenth chapter of the *Gītā*. 1454 In this way, God has explained the Vedas which are as His breath from the beginning of the first chapter to the end of the seventeenth chapter. 1455 The eighteenth is the last chapter in which is summed up the whole pith of the *Gītā*, beginning from the first chapter to the end of the seventeenth chapter. 1456 In this way the poetical work *Shrī Bhagavadgītā* is the ocean of all knowledge, and know that it is conspicuous on account of its excelling in generosity the whole Vedas itself. 1457. The Veda is already rich, but none is so miserly as it is, for it is to be heard only by the three classes (the Brāhmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas) 1458 The Veda does not authorize women, Shūdras and others who are caught in the painful earthly life to take advantage of its knowledge, and so it has remained silent 1459 So I think in order to make good its former defect, the Veda has revealed itself as the *Gītā*, fit to be enjoyed by anyone 1460 Is it not in this way that the Veda has become fit to be enjoyed by all? The Veda as the *Gītā* enters one's heart in the form of meaning,

the ears by listening and remains on one's lips by constant reading 1461 To live in the company of a constant repeater of the *Gītā* and to keep it in a book form by writing it 1462. by these means the Veda has opened in the form of the *Gītā* on the road of our earthly life a large storehouse of food as happiness and pure salvation to feed the hungry souls. 1463 In the open space of the sky one can roam about, or sit on the earth, and it is spacious enough for the light of the sun to have free play 1464 In the same manner in the enjoyment of the *Gītā* no difference is made as superior or inferior but by its gift of salvation it satisfies the whole world. 1465 The Veda was ashamed of its former defect, and has now obtained a good reputation by entering itself in the *Gītā* 1466. Therefore the Veda has revealed itself as the *Gītā* fit to be enjoyed to one's satisfaction and in it Shri Krishna has preached to the Son of Pandu. 1467 The cow gives milk out of love for its calf but it becomes useful to the whole household in the same manner God making Arjun as the plea has saved the whole world. 1468 Out of love for the *chātāk* bird the clouds rain down water but with it the whole moveable and immovable world is quenched. 1469 The sun rises exclusively for its love for the lotuses but with them the eyes of the people of the three worlds are made happy 1470 In the same way the Husband of Lakshmi the Lord Shri Krishna, making Arjun as the plea, revealed the *Gītā* and removed the burden of births and deaths from the world. 1471 Then is not the *Gītā* the sun which brightens the jewels of the *shāstras* in the three worlds, and lives in the sky as the mouth of the Lord of Lakshmi? 1472 That family indeed is holy and blessed in which Arjun was born. Being fitted for receiving the knowledge taught by the *Gītā* he erected an independent wall in the form of the *Gītā* round the world. 1473 Let this pass. Then the *sadguru* Shri Krishna brought back Arjun to the state of quality from that of non quality 1474 Then God said to Arjun O Arjun, does your heart accept



this *shāstra* of the *Gītā*?' Then Arjun replied, 'Yes, O God, by Your favour it does, indeed!' 1475. God replied, 'Dhananjay, though one happily finds treasure, he rarely enjoys it. 1476. Just think what efforts the gods and the demons had to undergo in churning such a large pot as the ocean of milk (which contained the coagulated milk). 1477. But even their efforts bore fruit. For they saw nectar with their eyes. But they made a mistake in its protection 1478. Therefore, nectar which brings immortality became the cause of the ruin of the demons. This is the result when one does not know how to enjoy a thing possessed 1479. Nahusha had become king of heaven. But he did not know how to behave there, and abused his position, don't you know that as a result he had to take birth as a snake?' 1480. Dhananjay, because you have stored a large quantity of good actions, you have been fit to hear the *Gītā Shāstra* which is the highest of all *shāstras*. 1481. Then accept the institution of this *shāstra*, and behave in obedience to it 1482. For, O Arjun, if you practise this *shāstra* and forsake its traditions, then your state will be like the state of the demons at the time of churning the ocean 1483. Kirīti, one may drink a cow's milk, but he must know the art of milking a cow. 1484. Thus the *Shrī Guru* may be pleased, and his disciple may be in possession of his instructions, but those instructions will only be fruitful if they are practised in obedience to the rules of tradition 1485. Now listen with reverence to the good tradition of this *Gītā Shāstra*'

## 67. To Whom The 'Gītā' Must Not Be Given

*'This knowledge in the "Gītā" must not be given to one devoid of religious austerity, nor to one who is slack regarding the gods and gurus, nor to one who does not wish to hear it, nor to one who cavils at Me'*

1486 'But, O Pārth, do not teach this *shāstra* thou hast earnestly received to one without religious austerity 1487 And even if the person is a practiser of religious austerities, but is

weak in his devotion towards his *guru* then he should be abandoned just as the Vedas abandon the last born (untouchable) 1488 A crow however old it is, is not given the sacrificial oblation so do not teach this *Gīta Shāstra* to one who is a great practiser of austerities but is without devotion towards his *guru*. 1489 One may be a practiser of bodily austerities, and may have devotion for his *guru* and God, but if he is not inclined to listen 1490 then although he might be well up in the first two qualities, still he is not fit to listen to the instructions of the *Gīta* 1491 A pearl may be very good but if it is not bored, how can the gold thread enter? 1492 Who will say that the ocean is not deep? But the run which falls on it is of no use. 1493 It is better to give delicious food in generosity to a hungry person than to give it to one who is already satisfied 1494 Not even accidentally should you preach the *Gītā* to anyone, if he has no wish to listen to it, even if he is fit in other respects 1495 The eye has good knowledge of a form but what is the good of using it for the purpose of smelling? Therefore, that which is useful in a certain place, bears fruit there. 1496. So husband of Subhadrā, ensure that those to whom you preach the *Gītā* are practisers of austerities and devoted to their *gurus* but even they should be avoided if they dislike to listen to the *Gītā Shāstra* 1497 If you find a person endowed with religious austerity and devotion to a *guru*, and also a keen desire to listen to the *Gītā* 1498 but if he considers Me as ordinary who am the creator of the *Gītā Shāstra* and the Ruler of all, 1499 and also those who revile Me and My *bhaktas* these are not fit for the teaching of the *Gītā* 1500 All good possessions of such are like a lamp with oil and wick but giving no light at night. 1501 A human body may have a fair complexion, and youthful, and may have ornaments on it, but of what use is it if it is without life? 1502 It is like a house built of gold, but the door of which is guarded by a snake 1503 Or It is like delicious food with deadly poison in it. Or it

is like friendship inwardly full of cunning. 1504 O wakeful Arjun, know that the austerity, the devotion to a *guru*, and the intelligence of one who reviles Me and My *bhaktas* are like the above illustrations 1505 Dhananjay, just for this reason, even if the *bhakta* is possessed of good intellect and is a practiser of austerities, still let him not touch this *Gītā Shāstra* 1506 In brief, do not teach this *Gītā Shāstra* out of curiosity to the reviler, even if he is as great as Brahmadeva himself 1507 Wielder of the bow, the temple of a *guru's bhakti* now complete has its foundation stone in the form of austerities 1508. The door as desire for listening to this temple is ever open at the front, and has a summit of jewels of non-revilers'

## 68 The Bliss Of Self-Abandonment

*'He who has the uttermost devotion to Me and will teach this deep secret to My devotees he shall without doubt come to Me alone'*

1509 'Such a *bhakta* is, as it were, a holy temple, and in it the *Gītā*, is as it were, the god of jewels Establish worship there Then in the world you will have my glory. 1510 For "Om" as a single letter was caught in the womb of the three syllables "A, U and Ma" 1511. That letter "Om" was enlarged in the *Gītā*, or the *Gītā* is, as it were, the *Gāyatrī mantra*, and the same has borne fruit and flowers as its *ślokas* 1512 He who acquaints My *bhakta* with the *Gītā* which clears the secret of the *Gāyatrī mantra*, this action is equal to enabling a mother to meet the child entirely dependent on her 1513 He who reverently teaches My *bhakta* the *Gītā* with love as mentioned in the above illustration will be absorbed in My form after his death'

## 69 God's Dearest Is One Who Knows the 'Gītā' Secret

*'Among men none is dearer to Me, nor shall there ever be any on earth dearer to Me'*

1514 'One who, though having a bodily form, remains apart with heart and soul from bodily desires, is dear to Me.

1515 Though the knowing ones the practisers of the way of works, and the practisers of austerities know Me, still of all these, to Me the knower of the secret of the *Gītā* is the dearest  
 1516. O Pandav, no one is dearer to Me on this earth, than the one who explains the *Gītā* to a multitude of My *bhaktas*  
 1517 One who steadies his mind through his love for Me and teaches the *Gītā Shāstra* to a multitude of My *bhaktas* becomes a chief ornament of the saints 1518 By making the hair on their bodies stand on end like the new foliage of a tree, and making them toss to and fro like a tree moving by the force of a gentle breeze and filling their eyes with the tears of joy like flowers full of honey 1519 and making them utter the sounds of blessing like a cuckoo singing at its highest pitch the vernal season enters the garden as my *bhaktas* as the instructor of the *Gītā*  
 1520 Just as the moon rises in the sky by making the *chakor* bird feel as if it had its life's fruit, or just as a cloud comes by replying to the calls of the peacocks, 1521 in the same way he who showers jewels in the form of *ślokas* of the *Gītā* among the company of the good with the intention of possessing Me, 1522 I like him more than all those *bhaktas* who have already been in the past, and more than all to be born in the future. 1523 O Arjun, I like him so much that I store in My heart him who gives a feast of the meaning of the *Gītā* to the saints.

## 70 God Worshipped By The Oblation Of Spiritual Knowledge

*'He who studies this "Gita" dialogue on moksha" (salvation) he offers Me the oblation of knowledge about the Supreme Soul so I understand*

1524 'The dialogue which has passed between you and Me has, as it were, come to conquer "*moksha*" on earth. 1525 One who reads this dialogue between us without quinding the different words in it, since it is the giver of every desired thing

1526. has, as it were, sacrificed his ignorance in the burning fire of knowledge, and has satisfied Me, the Supreme Spirit. 1527. Those who sing the *Gītā* and describe its greatness obtain the same glory which is obtained by the wise after experiencing the meaning of it. 1528. The common reader of the *Gītā* has the same fruit as is obtained by one who understands its true meaning. Mother *Gītā* does not make a difference between the knowing and the unknowing.'

## 71. The Reward Of Hearing The 'Gītā'

*'The one who merely listens (to the "Gītā") with faith and free from malice, he also shall be released from sins and shall attain to the happy realm of the righteous.'*

1529. 'He who gives up censure of all other ways, and believes in listening to the reading of the *Gītā*, 1530 sees all his sins instantly disappear as the letters of the *Gītā* fall on his ears. 1531. As when fire enters a forest, the beasts and birds in it run away in ten directions, 1532 or as when the sun rises on the rising mountain, darkness in the sky disappears, 1533. so, as the loud reading of the *Gītā* enters the heart through the great doors of the ears, sins committed even before the creation of the earth are destroyed. 1534. Thus the whole family of the reader becomes pure, he himself becomes a mass of good actions, and receives a rare benefit, 1535 viz., that of performing as many horse-sacrifices as the letters of the *Gītā* which during its reading have entered his heart through the openings of his ears. 1536. By listening to the reading of the *Gītā*, sins are destroyed and religion increases, and thereby ultimately one gets to enjoy the kingdom of heaven. 1537. Such a man has his first stay of his journey in heaven, and there he enjoys happiness as long as he wishes, and then joins Me. 1538 O Dhananjay, in brief, the reader of the *Gītā* and the listener have Me, the mass of happiness, as the fruit given them by the *Gītā*. 1539. But, to pause a little, have you accomplished the purpose for which I started to explain this *Gītā Shāstra*?'

## 72. Overcoming The Delusion From Ignorance

*O Pārth, hast thou listened attentively? O Dhananjay, has the delusion of thy ignorance been destroyed?*

1540 'Oh Pāṇḍav just tell Me if all the propositions of the *Gītā Shāstra* have made their full impression on your heart? 1541 We delivered these propositions to your ears, but did your ears in the same manner deliver them to your heart? 1542 I hope they were not useless on account of inattention, or negligence on your part. 1543 If they have reached your heart just as I have explained them then let Me ask you to repeat them quickly. 1544 Do you still have the delusion, or has it disappeared which had arisen from your ignorance formerly and which had thrown you into confusion? 1545 How much shall I go on asking you? Just tell Me, if you ascribe good or bad action to the Supreme Spirit? 1546. So that Pārth might not be lost in self joy God by the plea of this question brought him to the state of duality. 1547 If Pārth became completely absorbed in the essence of the Supreme Brahma, he would not accomplish his future purpose of fighting, therefore the Lord Shri Krishna did not let him cross the boundary of duality. 1548 Otherwise, Shri Krishna, who is the All knowing did He not understand His own doing? But just for this reason God questioned Arjun. 1549 Arjun had lost his own former self but by this question he was completely brought to his former self, and God made him to admit this. 1550 Although the moon is apart from the ocean and gives light to the multitude of stars in the sky still he is not apart from the ocean. 1551 The state of the Supreme Essence of Brahma in one is dissolved as he forgets himself to be the Supreme Essence, and on that same account the whole world is also such. 1552. Sometimes Arjun forgot that he himself was Brahma, and sometimes thinking that he was himself Brahma, Arjun with great difficulty came to his bodily consciousness. 1553 He passed his hand over the hair

on his body which was erect, and wiped off the drops of perspiration. 1554. He steadied his body which was oscillating on account of the upheaving vital air. His voice was choked. He stopped all these changes within himself. 1555 He restrained and then wiped away the stream of tears which was flowing from his eyes. 1556 His voice was choked by various excessive desires, but he checked them in his heart. 1557 He made firm his faltering voice, and steadied his irregular breathing.

### 73. The End Of Arjun's Delusion And Doubt

*Arjun answered ' My delusion is destroyed and I have a good memory ( of Thy secret ) By Thy grace, O Achyuta ( Shrī Krishna ), I am now free from doubt, and am now ready for Thy command.'*

1558. Then Arjun said, ' O God, You ask me whether I still love delusion? Then in reply I have to tell You that it has departed with all its bag and baggage. 1559 Can it be worthy of any townsman to ask him if he sees darkness when the sun has come near him? 1560 In the same way, O Lord Shrī Krishna, is not my seeing You with my eyes sufficient to destroy illusion? 1561 Besides, You have explained in full, with love surpassing even that of a mother, the knowledge which could not be had from anyone aside from Yourself. 1562. Where is now the necessity of Your question whether my illusion has passed away or not? My life today has become success by my union with You. 1563. I was entangled through pride in delusion about my state as Arjun. But on account of my union with You, I am free from it. Therefore, now questioning and answering, both disappear naturally. 1564. By Your favour of self-knowledge, my delusion has entirely passed away. 1565. Now I do not know the state of duality which had aroused in me the feeling of doing or not-doing an action. Now I am free from that state of duality, aside from You I know nothing in the world. 1566 No doubt has remained in me about it. Really I have obtained that state of Brahma where no action

remains to be performed. 1567 By Your favour I have obtained my real form and every action of mine has disappeared. But O Lord I have nothing to do without Your command. 1568. the visible thing which if obtained destroys every other visibility the difference which destroys the relation of duality between the *guru* and the disciple, and which is only one and all pervading. 1569 the obtaining of which destroys every other tie, the hope of which confounds every other hope, and the meeting with which makes one see himself everywhere. 1570 You are that *sadguru* of mine who helps non-duality and before whom the knowledge of duality becomes lame. 1571 You Yourself are the Supreme Brahma, and You destroy good and bad actions, and therefore You are fit to be served without limit. 1572. When the Ganges goes to serve the ocean and meets it it has just the form of the ocean. In the same manner You have given Your *bhaktas* the select portion of Your own position. 1573 O Shri Krishna, You are my *sadguru* and without duality and therefore fit to be served. And this my state of the Supreme Brahma is, I consider through Your favour. 1574 You have given me the happiness of service by destroying the barrier that had come across the state of oneness between You and me. 1575 You are the Lord of all gods, therefore, I will obey every command of Yours. In short, command me to do what You like. 1576. At this speech of Arjun, Shri Krishna out of extreme happiness and delight began to dance, and said, Arjun is as it were, a fruit obtained by Me who am Myself the fruit of the universe. 1577 Does not the ocean leave its boundary seeing its son the moon shining with all its phases? 1578. Now Sanjay was filled with delight as he saw Shri Krishna and Arjun wedded on the altar of dialogue. 1579 Sanjay was choked with love and said to King Dhritarāshtra, How fortunate are both of us that at such a critical time Shri Vyāsa protected us oh king! 1580 You are without physical sight still you and I had a vision of knowledge. 1581 I am appointed by you to drive your chariot



and to buy your horses after inspection, but I have been fortunate enough to listen to the dialogue between Shrī Krishna and Arjun 1582. The fight is so dreadful that whichever of the two parties is defeated, it is in reality our own defeat. 1583 And at such a critical time, what a grand favour ( of Vyāsa ) it is that through it we are able to enjoy openly the delight of the Supreme Brahma ' 1584. At this speech of Sanjay the heart of Dhritarāshtra did not melt, just as when the moon's rays fall on an ordinary stone it does not exude water. He was silent. 1585. Seeing the king's condition, Sanjay ceased talking about the dialogue, but through excess of joy he became like one mad, and began to talk. 1586 Being enraptured by the excess of delight he spoke to Dhritarāshtra, but he knew that the king was not fit to listen to it.

#### 74. Joy Of Fellowship With The Unseen

*Sanjay said : ' I have enjoyed this marvellous fellowship between Vāsudev ( Shrī Krishna ) and the great-souled Pārth ( Arjun ) and it has given me such thrills of joy as make my hair stand on end ' 4*

1587. Sanjay said, ' O King Dhritarāshtra, when your nephew Arjun so spoke, Shrī Krishna was mightily glad. 1588. The ocean has two different names as the Eastern and the Western, but in regard to water they are one 1589. So also, Shrī Krishna and Arjun are different on account of different bodies, but in their dialogue that difference disappeared 1590. If two mirrors after being cleaned are placed opposite to each other, each shows the reflection of the other. 1591 In the same manner, God saw Arjun with Himself in Himself, and Arjun began to see in himself God and himself. 1592 When the God of gods out of regard for His *bhaktas* began to look into Himself, then there He saw the *bhaktas* also. 1593. Because there was a complete absence of duality, the Lord Shrī Krishna and Arjun became merged in excessive oneness. 1594. If the duality between them ceases, then questions and

answers also between them must cease. And if the difference exists then how can there be the joy of dialogue? 1595 I listened to that conversation of the Lord Shri Krishna and Arjun about the state of duality and just then duality disappeared. 1596. If two mirrors after cleaning are placed opposite to each other how is it to be understood which one is looking into the other? 1597 So also if two lamps are placed opposite to each other how is it to be known which is the giver of light, and which receives the light? 1598 If one sun rises opposite to another sun, how is it to be known which gives the light and which receives it? 1599 In the intense conversation Shri Krishna and Arjun arrived at such a state of oneness that consideration of it comes to a standstill. 1600 If salt is so placed as to separate two joining streams the salt will be turned to water in a moment. 1601 My state was just the same when I listened to the conversation between Shri Krishna and Arjun. 1602. As Sanjay was saying this his existence as Sanjay was lost in the eight affections of the body arising from the quality of goodness. 1603 The hair on his body stood on end, and it became puckered. He sat in a state of silence. He perspired and began to tremble violently. 1604 Through the excess of the delight of non-duality his eyes were full of the joy of the Supreme Brahma and tears streamed from them. 1605 His stomach could not contain anything and his throat became choked, and on account of heavy breathing he could not utter a word. 1606. In brief the eight affections of the body stole away Sanjay's power of speech and he became the open ground of the conversation between Shri Krishna and Arjun. 1607 Joy is such that it brings peace of itself and so Sanjay soon came to consciousness.

## 75 The Yoga Message From Krishna

*From Shri Krishna Himself the Lord of Yoga I have by the favour of Vyāsa heard the utterly profound "Yoga secret"*

1608. When Sanjay's excess of joy had quite ebbed away, he said, 'Through the favour of Shrī Vyāsa I have been able to listen to this secret which even the Upanishads do not know. 1609. As soon as I heard that secret I was caught in the embrace of the Supreme Brahma, and ignorance vanished with the idea of "I" and "Thou." 1610. The speech of the Lord Shrī Krishna in whom all the paths of *Yoga* meet, was easy for me to understand through the favour of Shrī Vyāsa 1611. Making Arjun as the plea, the Lord Shrī Krishna, as it were, became Arjun and addressed Himself 1612 My ears became fit to listen to that speech Wonderful and indescribable indeed is the power of the *Shrī Guru*'

## 76. An Uplifting Memory

*'O King Dhritarāshtra, again and again I remember the wonderful and sacred dialogue between Shrī Krishna and Arjun and it fills me again and again with joy.'*

1613. Talking to the king, Sanjay felt astonished and lost consciousness. It was like the lustre of a jewel absorbed in the lustre of its own form. 1614. The lakes on the Himālaya mountains become as hard as crystal in the moonlight, and just as in the sunshine water oozes from it, 1615 so as Sanjay returned to consciousness, he thought of the dialogue, and again he fell into unconsciousness.

## 77. Influence Of Krishna's Talk With Arjun

*'As I recall often and anon, O king, the very wonderful form of Hari, I am more and more amazed and filled with joy.'*

1616 Then in great vehemence of delight Sanjay said, 'Oh king, how can you be silent after seeing the universal form of Shrī Hari? 1617 How can I miss that which is seen without being seen, and which comes into one's remembrance, even if one tried to forget it? 1618 There is nothing like time enough to think of the wonder of seeing the universal form of Shrī Hari. This great universal flood is carrying me

away along with it. 1619 In this way Sanjay bathed in the confluence of the discourse between Shri Krishna and Arjun and bade farewell to bodily egoism. 1620 Then with delight which he could not restrain he was completely choked with emotion and with suffocated throat he said repeatedly Shri Krishna. 1621 Dhritarashtra was ignorant of this state of Sanjay resulting from the good quality of the eight affections of the body of Sanjay And as he was on the point of forming an idea of that state, 1622 Sanjay quieted his delight within himself and quenched the rise of the eight affections of the body 1623 Then Dhritarashtra said Oh Sanjay Vyāsa has kept you with me especially to report to me the occurrences of the battle from time to time, and what is this that you are doing instead of doing that? 1624 Why has Vyāsa seated you here? Without an occasion what is this that you are saying? 1625 If an inhabitant of a jungle is taken into a royal palace, he feels sad everywhere. Or when it is day to us it is night to the spirits. 1626. One who has no experience of a matter will regard it as terrible and also he is likely to regard a good thing as bad. 1627 Then Dhritarashtra again said, O Sanjay whom will this war which has commenced make victorious? 1628. Even if naturally considered it is our belief that Duryodhan is specially powerful. 1629 And considering the strength of the opposite party of the Pāndavas, Duryodhan has an army one and a half times as many and will not that army quite surely obtain the victory? 1630 At least we think it will but we do not know what you think of its future. Therefore, O Sanjay just do tell me what you think of it.

## 78 Victory From The Unseen Presence

*My conviction is that wherever Shri Krishna the Lord of Yoga and Parth ( Arjun ) the wielder of the bow may be, in that place there will always be prosperity triumph, supremacy and justice.*

1631 On this Sanjay said, 'Sire, I do not know what will become of them. Wherever life is, there are the living.

1632 There is moonlight where there is the moon. Where there is the God Shiva there must be Shakti (Pārvatī, His wife), and where there are saints there is sure to be a good thought.

1633 An army follows a king, relation follows love, and wherever there is fire there is the power to burn.

1634 Mercy lives with religion, religion begets happiness, and in happiness lives the Supreme Being.

1635. Where there is spring there is sure to be new foliage, and where there is new foliage there must be flowers, and where there are flowers there must be the multitudes of bumble bees.

1636 In a *guru* there is knowledge, in knowledge there is self-revelation and in self revelation there is comfort

1637. Where there is fortune there are enjoyments, and there is pleasure in enjoyments. Well let that pass

Where there is the sun, there must be light.

1638 In this way, where there is the Lord Shrī Krishna who has patronized the four grand objects of the human affections and faculties (*dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *moksha*) there is assuredly Lakshmī (the goddess of wealth).

1639 And for one who is in possession of Lakshmī with her husband, the Mother of the universe, will not the divine accomplishments, such as *animā* and others, become his slaves?

1640. Shrī Krishna in His bodily form is victory itself, and the party which has Him is sure to gain a quick victory.

1641. Arjun is known as *Vijay* (Victorious), and Shrī Krishna is also an image of victory. Know for certain that Lakshmī resides even there with entire victory.

1642. When he (Arjun) has such parents (Shrī Krishna and His wife Lakshmī), will it not be possible for the trees of his country to conquer of a surety the divine wish-tree?

1643. Why should not the pebbles of his country become the wish-jewels? And why should not the land of his country be of gold?

1644. Why should not the rivers of his town flow with nectar? O King, just think. Can there be any wonder in all these?

1645. His natural

utterance of a word can safely be called a Veda. Then why will He Himself not be even in His body the Supreme and the all sustaining essence Brahma? 1646 One who has Shri Krishna for his father and Lakshmi for his mother is in possession of both heaven and salvation 1647 Therefore on whatever side the Lord of Lakshmi stands there all the divine accomplishments are ready to serve. Aside from this I do not know anything else. 1648. Although a cloud draws water from the ocean, still it is of better use than that (ocean) So also in this battle to-day Parth is of more use. 1649 No doubt the touchstone turns iron into gold but the latter alone knows the public dealings. 1650 One is likely to think that in this illustration the position of the *guru* is lowered but it is not so. For fire itself shines as a lamp. 1651 So through the power of God, Arjun is powerful But God likes the praise of power being given to Arjun more than to Himself Such is the glory of this praise 1652 A father likes to be excelled by his son in all qualities. In Shri Krishna that desire became fruitful. 1653 In brief O King Dhritarāshtra, Arjun achieved very rare success by Krishna's favour And the side which Arjun has deliberately taken will obtain victory 1654 Do you doubt this? If victory does not go to that party then that is not a true victory 1655 So wherever there are the three, Shri Krishna and Lakshmi and Arjun the son of Pandu, there victory and prosperity are sure to exist. 1656. If you believe the word of Vyāsa, then consider my prophesy as unchanging 1657 Where there is Shri Krishna with Lakshmi and where there is the multitude of His *bhaktas* there happiness and prosperity come without seeking 1658 If this were otherwise, then I would not call myself the disciple of Vyāsa. Saying this loudly he raised his hand. 1659 Thus Sanjay gave to Dhritarāshtra the substance of the whole *Bhārat* in verse 78 of the *Gītā*'s last chapter 1660 It cannot be told how large fire is, but it can be brought on a wick's end to expel darkness in the sun's absence 1661 The Vedas

took the form of the *Bhārat* containing one hundred and twenty-five thousand verses, and the *Bhārat* became the *Gītā* of seven hundred verses only. 1662. The last verse of the *Gītā* gives the pith of its seven hundred verses, which is the utterance of Sanjay, the disciple of Vyāsa. 1663. One who will believe on this one verse only, will possess the true form of all learning. 1664. The words of the *Gītā* make up the seven hundred verses. How can I style them? Should they be called as mere verses, or the divine nectar in the heaven of the *Gītā*? 1665 In my opinion the seven hundred verses are the seven hundred pillars of the assembly hall<sup>a</sup> as the *Gītā* of King Soul. 1666 The *Gītā* is, as it were, the goddess who can be explained by seven hundred *mantras* (incantations), and who feels delighted by the destruction of Mahishāsura (buffalo-demon) as avarice. 1667. Therefore, whosoever will serve the goddess *Gītā* by his mind, body and speech, him this *Gītā* will make the overlord of the empire of self-joy. 1668. One verse of the *Gītā* invades ignorance as darkness, and in this way assuredly surpasses the sun The Lord Shrī Krishna has produced seven hundred such verses. 1669 The verses of the *Gītā* have, as it were, become the arcade for the vines as letters of the verses, as rest for the wearied travellers on the path of earthly life. 1670. Or this *Gītā* is, as it were, a creeper of lotuses full blown in the lake by the name of Shrī Krishna, the lotuses of which are enjoyed by the fortunate bumble bees as saints. 1671. Or I think these are not verses I think otherwise of them. I think these verses are so many minstrels to extol the glory of the *Gītā*. 1672 All the *shāstras* have, as it were, come to stay in the town of the *Gītā* by first building a beautiful wall around it of the seven hundred verses 1673 The verses are, as it were, the arms of the *Gītā* spread out to embrace in love her husband, the soul. 1674 Or the verses are the bumble bees on the lotus of the *Gītā*. Or they are the waves on the ocean of the *Gītā* Or they are the horses of the chariot of the *Gītā* of Shrī Hari. 1675. Or

it may be that because Arjun was, as it were the *Simhastha*\* festival, the whole multitude of holy waters as verses came to meet the Ganges as the *Gītā* 1676. Or it is not a line of a verse, but it is the wish jewel giving the heart the Supreme Brahma which is inconceivable. Or the lines are, as it were, the wish-trees giving the Supreme Brahma which is without variableness. 1677 There are such seven hundred verses there. And each one seems better than the others. So which verse can I select and applaud singly? 1678. Can a light have difference such as former and after? Can the sun have such a difference as older and younger? Can the ocean of nectar have any difference such as deep and shallow? 1679 Regarding a wish-cow no difference can be made such as suckling or milch. 1680 Therefore, no one should say that the verses of the *Gītā* can be graded. Can there be the difference of old and new among flowers of a tree of paradise? 1681 I really cannot differentiate as of more or less importance between the verses of the *Gītā* No difference also can be made between a listener and a reader 1682 For it is well known that in the *Gītā Shāstra* Shri Krishna alone is the listener and the reader Even an ordinary man knows this. 1683 Whatever fruit can be obtained from understanding the meaning of the *Gītā* the same can be obtained by the mere reading of it and therefore, it gives the same importance to the listener as to the reader 1684 I have now no subject to explain. Know that the *Gītā* is an image of the Lord Shri Krishna in words. 1685 Every other *shāstra* gives the reader the meaning of the subject it treats and vanishes. Such is not the *Gītā Shāstra*! The whole of it is the Supreme Brahma. 1686 Out of mercy for the universe, God has made the delight of the Supreme Brahma so easy of access and by making Arjun the plea, He

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*Simhastha* is a festival occurring every twelve years when Jupiter is in the constellation of Leo a season considered by Hindus favourable for washing away of sins Nasik being its chief centre. See *Life And Teaching Of Tukaram* pp. 47-48 50 146 (



has revealed it 1687. Just as the moon with all its phases can pacify the afflicted three worlds, making the *chakor* bird as the plea, 1688 or just as Shankar ( God Shiva ) let down the stream of the Ganges, making Gautama as the plea with the intention of removing the calamity of men afflicted by *kali* and *kāla*, 1689 so also, making Arjun the calf, the cow as Lord Shrī Krishna has given to the world a quantity of milk that will be abundantly sufficient for it. 1690 If you heartily bathe in the *Gītā*-Ganges, you, surely will take its form, or if you even wet a tiny portion of the tongue with its reading. 1691. Just as the touch-stone turns iron to gold by only touching the farthest part of it, 1692. so no sooner will you hold the bowl in the form of the reading of the *Gītā* to your lips, and utter a verse of it, than you will have the fulness of the Supreme Brahma in your body. 1693 It will be fruitful even if, turning your head away, you lie on one side carelessly and the reading of the *Gītā* falls on your ears 1694 Just as an able donor never says 'No' to anyone, so also the *Gītā* gives nothing less than *moksha* (salvation) to the reader, listener, or anyone who understands its meaning. 1695. Therefore, in the company of a wise man one should use the *Gītā*. What is the good of reading other *shāstras*? 1696 The simple conversation between Shrī Krishna and Arjun was made as easy of access by Vyāsa as a thing on the palm of the hand 1697 Just as when a mother feeds her child, she gives it as small morsels of food as the child can take, 1698 or just as the wise restrain the motion of the wind by making a fan, 1699. in the same way, Shrī Vyāsa brought the *Gītā* within easy reach of women and the Shūdras by putting it in the *Anush-tubh* metre, that which is indeed beyond words. 1700. Had not the drops of the rain on the star of Arcturus produced pearls, how could they have beautified the bodies of beautiful women? 1701. Had not sound come in the form of a musical instrument, how could it have been heard? Had there been no flowers, how could fragrance have been enjoyed? 1702. If sweetness had

not been known in the form of sweet dishes how could the tongue have enjoyed it? Can an eye see its form without a mirror? 1703 Had not *Shrī Guru* who is the seer taken form as the visible, how could one have possessed Him through worship? 1704 In the same manner had not the Supreme Brahma, who is without limit, been confined within the limit of seven hundred verses, who could have known Him? 1705 Although a cloud holds water in it from the ocean, still the world looks hopefully at the cloud not at the ocean for the limitless ocean cannot be possessed by anyone. 1706. Had not Vyāsa written 700 such beautiful verses that they are beyond speech how could they have been enjoyed by the ear or described by speech? 1707 Vyāsa has laid the world under a great obligation inasmuch as he put the utterance of *Shrī Krishna* in book form 1708 The same work I have written in *Marāṭhi* easy of understanding by following the words of *Shrī Vyāsa*. 1709 Poor writer as I am, I have tried to explain the *Gītā* in the explanation of which even writers like Vyāsa had his doubts. 1710 The *Gītā* is, as it were the simple *Shankar* (God *Shiva*) He has (on His neck) the garland of flowers offered by Vyāsa. But I am sure he will not refuse my offer of the poor *dūroā* grass. 1711 Herds of elephants go to quench their thirst at the ocean of milk but does it refuse permission to the *eyeflies*? 1712 A newly fledged young bird even if it does not fly much yet lives in the sky the eagle that flies the whole sky lives there also. 1713 The gait of a swan in walking is supposed to be the best in the world but does it mean that no one should try to walk on the earth? 1714 A large pot according to its inside space contains much water Does not the hollow of the palm of the hand contains as much water as the space permits? 1715 A torch is large, and throws a great light. Does not a wick according to its tiny form throw a small light? 1716 According to the space the reflection of the sky in the ocean is very large, but even in a tiny pond of water the reflection is seen.

1717. Highly talented men like Vyāsa explain this work. Will it then be beside the argument, if we also try to explain it? 1718 In the ocean live animals as large as the Mandār mountain, and even there small fishes (*śhaphāra*), also, it seems, can swim 1719. Arun, the charioteer of the sun ( the dawn ), is near the person of the sun, and can see the sun But does an ant not see the same sun from the earth? 1720. Therefore, there is no reason to say that it is wrong, if ordinary men like us try to bring the same *Gītā* in the language of the country. 1721. If a father walks ahead, and his child follows his footsteps, will it not reach the same place as the father? 1722. In the same manner, if I follow the footsteps of Vyāsa, and ask the commentators ( of the *Gītā* ) to guide me, unfit as I am, where will I go, if not to the same place as these men? 1723. He by whose forbearance the earth unweariedly holds the moveable and the immovable on it, and whose nectar helps the moon to calm the whole world, 1724. by whose portion of lustre the sun removes the hindrance of darkness, 1725 through whose power the ocean has water and whose sweetness sweetens water, and whose beauty has made the sweetness beautiful, 1726. he who has given the wind its power, and through whose existence the sky has an extensive space, and on whose account knowledge is made the shining paramount king, 1727. on whose account the Veda has become a splendid speaker, and through whom happiness is prospering, and by means of whose power the whole universe has obtained a form, 1728. He the All-Benevolent, the All-Powerful *Guru*, the Lord of Nivṛtti has entered into and acts through me. 1729 I had the knowledge of the *Gītā* from my *sadguru* without effort, and the same *Gītā* I am trying to explain through the medium of Marāthī Is there cause for any wonder in this? 1730. The hunter boy ( Ekalavya ) had made a statue of earth of his ( adopted ) *Shrīguru* (Dronāchārya) on a mountain, and learned archery from him, and thus made his reputation universally sung in the three worlds 1731. Common trees growing in the vicinity

of sandalwood trees have the fragrance of the sandalwood trees. The garment of Vasishtha on account of its lustre began to vie with the sun. 1732. (The above illustrations are about inanimate things) As for me, I am endowed with life. Besides, I have a patron like my *Shri Guru* who just with a glance of mercy enables me to occupy his own seat. 1733 If one's eyesight is already clean, and if in addition it is helped by the sun then what can there be which it will not see? 1734 Therefore, every new breath of mine becomes a poetical work I Dnyāna deva, say What will the mercy of a *guru* not do? 1735 For this reason, I have explained the meaning of the *Gītā* in Marāṭhi so clearly that it is worthy of note by the common people. 1736. The meaning of the *Gītā* is made so clear in its Marāṭhi version that even in the absence of an expounder there will be no lack in understanding 1737 So my version will add beauty to the explanation of the expounder And if in the absence of a singer (expounder) it is just read the absence of the expounder will not be felt. 1738 A beautiful ornament looks more beautiful no doubt if put on a beautiful person but its beauty does not suffer even if it is not so used? 1739 Pearls naturally give beauty to gold but even stray pearls by their natural lustre look beautiful 1740 The round flowers of *mogars* in the beginning of the spring whether strung or stray there is no difference between them in regard to fragrance 1741 So if the Sanskrit *Gītā* is explained with the help of my Marāṭhi version it will no doubt add grace to it. Or even if my Marāṭhi version is explained instead of the original Sanskrit, that will also be graceful. In this way I have composed a poetical work doubly useful 1742 In it I have strung letters which are delicious on account of the juice of the Supreme Brahma (of which it treats) in the simple *ov* metre easily understandable from a child to an adult 1743 Just as a sandalwood tree has not to wait to spread its fragrance till it bears flowers, 1744 so my version as soon as it falls on one's ears, the listener is in a state of deep contempla

tion. My version, if only once heard, is sure to put one in the habit of listening to it repeatedly. 1745. As one begins to read my version it brings the light of knowledge. And if one experiences the sweetness of it, it will no doubt excel the sweetness of nectar even. 1746. This easily obtained poetical power of mine has become a resting place to all. Its hearing has overcome thought and intent contemplation. 1747. This version of mine will give one the select portion of the joy of self, and through the organ of hearing will satisfy all other organs. 1748. By its natural power the *chakor* bird enjoys the lunar nectar, and therefore it is supposed to be very clever. But every one can enjoy the moonlight. 1749. In this *shāstra* which deals with self-knowledge, only those who have acquired an inward sight are supposed to be persons of authority. But all will be happy by the skilful arrangement of words. 1750. Oh Sir, such is the glory of Shrī Nivrattipāth. This (version of the *Gītā*) is not a book. It is the glory of his favour. 1751. I do not know when God Shankar (Shiva) whispered the secret into the cavity of Pārvatī's ear in the vicinity of the Ocean of Milk. 1752. But it fell into the hands of him who was concealed in the womb of a fish, living in the waves of the Ocean of Milk. 1753. That Matsyendra (born of the fish) went to meet Chaurangīnāth who was crippled in his limbs, on the Saptashringī Mountain, and the latter became whole completely. 1754. Matsyendranāth delivered the secret to Goraksha in order to enjoy undisturbed contemplation. 1755. That Matsyendranāth crowned Gorakshanāth as the paramount king on the throne of *samādhi* (deep contemplation), for he was, as it were, a lake of lotuses of *yoga*, and brave in the destruction of sensual desires. 1756. Then Gorakshanāth delivered the glory with all its powers which had descended from God Shankara to Shrī Gamīnāth. 1757. Finding that Kālī (the bad spirit of quarrel) was overpowering all the human beings, he (Gamīnāth), commanded Shrī Nivrattināth as follows. 1758. 'The secret *mantra* of the first *guru* Shankar which has descended

to us through a line of disciples, 1759 should be accepted by you entirely in order to help those human beings in their trouble who are caught in the clutches of Kāl. 1760 Just as clouds rain heavily in the rainy season so Shri Nivṛttināth had this command of his *guru* in addition to his already kind nature.\* 1761 This book is, as it were, the shower of the juice of the Supreme Essence which he in his anxiety prepared making the interpretation of the *Gītā* his plea in order to redeem men from pain and affliction. 1762. I sat there with a longing like the *chātāk* bird to receive the favour of the *guru* and seeing me as the sole disciple, he favoured me, and therefore I have been able to achieve this success. 1763 In this way Shri Nivṛttināth delivered to me the fortune of deep meditation which has descended to him through his *guru*. 1764 I had not studied anything in particular to acquire knowledge, neither had I listened to the reading of other works. I did not know even how to serve the *guru* how then could I have the authority to write a book? 1765 But the book which in fact the *Shri Guru* composed using me as his pen, has indeed become the means of the protection of the whole world. 1766 I might have said something unpalatable for not being master of myself but I beg you you kind listeners, that you will have patience and pardon me like a mother. 1767 I do not know how to arrange words, or how to treat the subject neither do I know the figures of speech. 1768 As a doll dances in obedience to the pulling of the string by the chief actor so I spoke in obedience to the inspiration of the *guru* in my heart. 1769 I do not ask you to pardon my shortcomings in the book just for this reason. I submit the work of my *guru* to you which was in my keeping. 1770 If my defect is not made good in the assembly of you saints, then out of affection I shall get angry with you. 1771 Who is to be blamed, if the state of iron is not changed in contact with the touchstone? 1772 The duty of a streamlet is simply to fall in the Ganges. But

what can the former do, if the latter does not give it its own form? 1773. O you saints, by my great fortune I have approached your feet, then what is there in the world that I should lack? 1774. My *guru* has met me with you saints, and thereby all my desires have been fulfilled. 1775 In you I have a motherly home, and therefore, my longing to compose this work is accomplished. 1776. By the power of austerity one can turn the whole earth into gold, and the mountains into wish-jewels 1777. It is easy to fill up the seven seas with the divine nectar. It is not difficult to turn the stars into so many moons 1778. It is not a hard task to plant gardens of wish-trees. All these things can be accomplished through the power of austerities, *but* the secret meaning of the *Gītā* will not be understood without the favour of a *guru*. 1779. I am dumb every way Still through the favour of my *guru* I have so explained the *Gītā* in Marāthī that all people are able to see it clearly with their eyes\*. 1780 And through his favour, even I have crossed the ocean of the *Gītā*, and unfurled the banner of victory on its further shore. 1781 The temple of the version of the *Gītā* is complete On it is laid the pinnacle of the eighteenth chapter. In it the image of *Shrī Guru* is installed and worshipped 1782 The *Gītā* is, as it were, a simple mother, without guile. Men desirous of salvation are her children They miss the mother and wander without aim Oh you saints, it is your duty to bring them together. 1783 Dnyāndeva says 'Whatever I have spoken through your favour is not little, oh saints! 1784. In short, by the completion of this work, you<sup>8</sup> have given me the fruit of my good actions in my former births 1785. Because I trusted you, you fulfilled every desire of mine and made me happy 1786 Oh *Guru*, seeing your new creation for me, in the form of the version of the *Gītā* in Marāthī, we laugh at the creation of Vishvāmītra 1787. For it is perishable It was

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\* For a summary of verses 1707-79 see pp 68-69

created by Vishvāmitra for the sake of king Trishanku and to give a slight to Brahmadeva (the Creator) But your creation is not perishable, but everlasting 1788 God Shankara created an ocean of milk out of affection for His *bhakta* Upamanyu. But it contains poison, therefore I cannot say that it is equal to this work. 1789 All beings called on the sun for help in freeing them from the trouble of darkness and the demons. With his light the sun destroyed their pain no doubt but his defect is that the whole creation is troubled by his heat. 1790. The moon calms the afflicted world by its light, but it has dark spots on it. Then how can it be said that this work is like the moon? 1791 Therefore the work which you saints caused me to write is incomparable in the three worlds. 1792. In brief through your favour the song service of religion was successful. Now it only remains with me to serve you. 1793\* And now may God, the Soul of the universe, be pleased by this my offering of words and grant me the favour 1794 that the crookedness of the wicked should vanish, that a love for good actions be created in them, and that all beings should treat each other and one another with an increasing love. 1795 May the darkness of sin disappear and the sun of true religion shine and also may all the desires of all living beings be fulfilled. 1796 May all beings with good devotion meet with the multitudes of the servants of God who shower all forms of blessings over the world. 1797 The *bhaktas* of God are, as it were, the moving and talking orchards of wish-trees, the living towns of wish jewels, or the seas of divine nectar 1798 They are, as it were, moons without spot, or suns giving light by removing the darkness of the earthly life. May such servants of God be endeared by all. 1799 In short, may all the three worlds be full of happiness and may every being have a craving for

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For other renderings of this prayer in verses 1793-1801 see pp 69-72 in this book.



unceasing prayer to God. 1800. May those whose entire life depends on this work enjoy happiness in this and in the next world' 1801. On this the *sadguru* was pleased and said : 'Everything will come to pass as you say.' Having this assurance, Dnyāndev was very pleased 1802 In this way in the *kali* (evil) age, in the country of Mahārāshtra, on the south bank of the Godāvarī river, 1803. there is there Shrī Mohanīrāja (Shrī Mahālayā) the Life-Giver of the World at Nevāsa, (a sacred place within ten miles of the Godāvarī river), the holiest place in the three worlds 1804 In this sacred place was ruling Rāmarājā an ornament of the line of the Yādavs, master of the earth, and ruling his subjects with justice. 1805 There Dnyāndev, the disciple of Shrī Nivrattināth who was a descendent of the line of Shrī Shankar, made his Marāthī version as an ornament of the *Shrīmat Bhagavadgītā*. 1806. The conversation which took place between Shrī Krishna and Arjun, in the *Bhīshmaparva* of the great epic of the *Mahābhārata*, 1807. is, as it were, the cream of the Upanishads, and the home of all *shāstras*, and the pleasure-lake of the Paramahansa saints 1808 The eighteenth chapter is the top of the *Gītā*, so Dnyāndev, the disciple of Shrī Nivrattī, has said 1809 Gradually may every creature gain entire happiness by the holy riches of this work. 1810 This version was composed by Dnyāneshwar in the year 1212 of the *Shaka* era, and Sacchidānanda wrote it out (for Dnyāndev) with reverence \*

### Eknāth's Commendation Of The 'Dnyāneshwarī'

The verses of Shrī Eknāth Mahārāja as his opinion of *Dnyāneshwarī* after his research of it —1 In the year 1506 of the *Shaka* era, Eknāth, the disciple of Janārdan, corrected

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\* On this closing historical note by Dnyāneshwar see p. 72 Concerning Sacchidānanda Bābā see M. D. Altekar's view on p. 76, Pandit N. R. Godbole's view on p. 85 (section vi), p. 91 (section 5), p. 95 (section 10).

a copy of the *Gītā Dnyāneshwari*. 2 The work was already correct but owing to the interpolations of different readings, it had become unconnected. But Eknāth went through it, and corrected the *Dnyāneshwari*. 3 Obeisance to the spotless Dnyāneshwar Mahārāj by reading whose version of the *Gītā* a devoted reader obtains entire knowledge of it. 4 The correction was completed in Pratishtan (modern Paithan) on the bank of the Godāvari river on the great festival of Kapila shashti which comes once in sixty years on the dark half of the month of Bhādrapad. 5 The insertion of a Marāṭhi *ovī* (verse) in the *Dnyāneshwari* by anyone, will be like placing the shell of the cocoanut in a dish of divine nectar. May this be well known.

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## CHAPTER XII

### DNYĀNESHVAR'S 'HARIPĀTH' OR 'CALL TO PRAYER'

#### 1. Introductory

(1) Dr Justin E. Abbott wrote 'These verses are popularly ascribed to Dnyāndev. The style is evidence of age. Conciseness in the expression of his thoughts leads to many difficulties in translation, and a free translation seems necessary rather than a literal one. The spiritual gleanings that may be made will meet with a sympathetic response from every heart. In some printed editions there are only 27 verses. I have translated the 28th as it may be from the same author as the others are.' (2) Pandit N. R. Godbole wrote 'In this composition there are many words unconnected by case terminations, therefore they can be interpreted in almost any way. I have before me five interpretations and all differ more or less. I have endeavoured to pick out the best interpretation after careful sifting. How far I have succeeded, I leave it to the reader to judge.' Pandit Godbole added 'I seriously doubt whether this could have been the composition of Dnyāneshwar.' This would appear to be supported by Dr. Abbott's impression about 'the style' giving 'evidence of age,' seeing Dnyāneshwar died young. (3) Our own contribution in this chapter has been limited to weaving together the translations made by Dr. Abbott and Pandit Godbole.

#### 2. Translation

1. (1) By standing for merely a moment at the door of God's temple, the four forms of Final Deliverance are obtained. (2) Call on Hari (God) with your lips. Call on Hari with your lips! Who can measure the value of this holy

act? (3) Although you are in the midst of this worldly life, let your tongue keep repeating the names of God. So the *Shāstras* loudly proclaim. (4) Says Dnyāndev my authority for this. For following his secret scribed by him in his various *Purānas* ) the king of *vrishna* ) became subject to the Pāṇḍavas, and served use as their menial.

) The four *Vedas* endeavoured to understand God *āstras* made an effort to find out the Primal Cause reation ) i. e., God. The *Purānas* eighteen in ve sung of the qualities and acts of Hari ( i. e., ) As one churns cream for butter so search these and again the Infinite One. Discard all stories that : ways. (3) Hari, the Soul of the Universe, is one e united the individual and the universal Soul. Let mind follow useless and difficult paths. (4) Says in this Call To Prayer. Hari Himself is Vai ( heaven ) I see Hari deeply pervading the whole

.) That which is formed of the three qualities ( or unreal but that which is formed without the three or *gunas* ) is real. This *Haripāth* ( Call To Prayer ) it of both the real and the unreal. (2) In thinking s qualities and what has not, and what possesses the lities and what is without qualities. It must be re that without Hari ( God as Spirit ) the thoughts of re in vain. (3) Worship Hari who is unmanifested it form, and who is the cause of the animate and creation. (4) Says Dnyāndev. My contemplation are full of Hari and therefore I am in possession of the good deeds stored up from an infinite number

1) No one should talk of devotion without sincerity  
tion without sincere devotion or of strength where

there is no power. (2) Do not think how a certain deity will be pleased; but be quiet. You are merely worrying yourself for nothing. (3) Day and night you are labouring hard for your family; but why do you not worship Hari (God) in the midst of your work? (4) Says Dnyāndev. 'Constantly repeat the names of Hari (God); and the worldly life will lose its attraction.'

5. (1) You will not succeed in the attainment of God by means of *yoga* practices, sacrifices or ceremonies. These are merely impediments in your accomplishment, and will only create hypocrisy in you. (2) Know for certain that there can be no knowledge of God without devotion. How can one gain experience except with the help of a *guru*? (3) Without austerities a deity is not accessible. None can receive, without giving. There can be no benefit unless one opens his heart to God. (4) Says Dnyāndev 'From my own experience I tell you that the ways of salvation are found in the company of the good.'

6 (1) Good instruction may be given, but not understood, yet through experience it may sink deep into the heart. (2) A camphor wick, when lighted, may burn brightly for a moment, and then the light goes out. So it may be with the best of instruction. (3) Salvation may come to one, but through Fate he may lose it. The *bhakta* of Hari (the saint of God) does not fare in that way, he is the recipient of the good only. (4) Says Dnyāndev 'I find sweetness of life in association with good people, where Hari is seen as the essential *ātmā* (spirit) in men and also in the physical world'

7 (1) The mountains of bad deeds are the result of being undevoted, such a person becomes as hard as adamant. (2) One who is without devotion falls from the right path, and such a person is indeed unfortunate as he does not worship Hari (God). (3) Some who are given to much speaking, jabber away to the Infinite One. How can Hari (God) come to the

aid of such ? (4) Says Dnyāndev 'The Soul which pervades every being is my authority and my only store of fortune.

8 (1) Let your mental inclinations follow the company of the good and in this way you can make Shripati (God) your own (2) The sincerity of the heart is seen in the repeating of the names Rāma Krishna. It was those names that Shiva used in his repetition of names. (3) If the means used brings about faith in the unity of all things, then the chains of duality cannot harm one. (4) The sweetness of the nectar of the name of God is enjoyed by the *yogī* worshippers of Vishnu, and that gives them the bloom of life. (5) Pralhād received an answer as soon as he called on God, in the same way Uddhava received Krishna the Generous Giver (6) Says Dnyāndev 'The repetition of God's names is the simplest of all means of salvation although rarely is a person found doing it.

9 (1) His knowledge is good for nothing whose tongue does not utter the names of Vishnu and whose mind is not given to the contemplation of Rāma Krishna. (2) He is born unfortunate who is not acquainted with the Monist secret (literally the path of non-duality) Then how can such a one steady his mind on Rāma Krishna ? (3) One who has not gained knowledge of non-duality (i e., of Monism) from his *guru* how will he be able to wipe out the sense of duality ? And how will he sing the name of God ? (4) Says Dnyāndev My contemplation is of the form of God with qualities. I silently practise the repetition of God's names amid all worldly affairs

10 (1) Bathing at the confluence of the three sacred rivers (the Ganges, Yamuna, and Sarasvatī) and wandering to all the sacred places, are of no avail unless one has his heart set on the name of God. (2) The man is surely sinful who turns away from the name of God. Except Hari (God) there is no one to rush to his help. (3) The sage Vālmīki has said in his well known *Purāna* the *Rāmāyana* that God's name

has the power to save all the three worlds (4) Says Dnyāndev : ' Repeat Hari's names, and that will save yourself and all your family line.'

11. (1) At the mere utterance of Hari's ( God's ) name, heaps of bad actions will vanish in a moment. (2) Just as dry grass loses its identity at the touch of fire, so in repeating Hari's ( God's ) name we become like Him. (3) The name of Hari is a mystic *mantra* whose power has no limit. Through its fear the disturbances of the demons are dispersed (4) Says Dnyāndev . ' My Hari ( God ) is so powerful that His power could not be fathomed even by the Upanishads.'

12 (1) Visiting sacred bathing places, performing religious ceremonies, practising the prescribed religious observāṇces, and the acquisition of the accomplishments ( literally *siddhīs* ) are nothing but a hindrance to those people who have no devotion to God. (2) The acquisition of God can only be effected through the strength of devotion to God, not otherwise By the strength of devotion, Hari ( God ) can be grasped, just as a thing can be grasped tightly in one's palm. (3) Just as it is impossible to pick up granules of quick-silver that have fallen on the ground, so all other means of salvation are impossible. (4) Says Dnyāndev ' My *guru*, Nivrīti, has given into my possession the entire knowledge of the acquisition of God who is beyond the three *guṇas* ( qualities )'

13 (1) Unless the mind loses the thought of duality, and loses its identity in the close contemplation of Hari ( Gōd ), the bliss arising from union with God is not possible. (2) That is the crowning glory of intellect. All *siddhīs* ( accomplishments personified ) can be attained only through union with Keshirāja ( i. e, God ). (3) *Riddhīs* and *Siddhīs* ( accomplishments personified ) prove to be hindrances as long as the mind has not experienced the supreme spiritual joy. (4) Says Dnyāndev . ' My unceasing thought of God ( Hari ) brings me this restful satisfaction.'

14 (1) He who repeats the *Haripāṭh* ( i. e., Call To Prayer ) regularly sincerely and a certain number of times, death will not even touch him. (2) The mere pronouncing of the names Rāma Krishna has the value of an infinite number of austerities. The whole herd of sins will run away before it. (3) The God Shiva ever repeats the *mantra* Hari, Hari Hari, and those who have the same *mantra* on their tongue have the Final Deliverance as their reward (4) Says Dnyāṇdev I always repeat the *mantra* of the names of Nārāyaṇ, and thereby I have gained the knowledge of the Soul.

15 (1) One who has given himself up to the repetition of Hari's ( God's ) names, who has cast away the sense of duality and who has fully understood the principle of non duality ( i. e., Monism ) is seldom seen. (2) When this idea of similarity is understood everything is seen to be the same as Hari ( God ) Peace and self restraint become Hari ( God ) Himself (3) Rāma is the same in everything in the human body and in all that is non human just as the sun shines alike everywhere by its thousands of rays. (4) Says Dnyāṇdev ' Repetition of Hari's ( God's ) name has been my regular rule and therefore I am now freed from future births.

16 (1) The man who repeats Hari's ( God's ) names is hard to find, yet the names of Rāma Krishna are easy to repeat (2) The repeater of the names of Rāma Krishna acquires emancipation from the thralldom of *māyā* and absorption in the contemplation of the divine essence for he is in possession of all the mystic powers. (3) By repeating Hari's ( God's ) name in prayer one realizes the mystic powers, the divine intellect and the sense of true religion and the earthly desires in worldly affairs that come to the repeater of Hari's name are quieted by the company of the saints. (4) Says Dnyāṇdev Let the names of Rāma Krishna be impressed on the mind and *Ātmārāma* ( God ) will be seen pervading everything



17. (1) He who repeats with his lips the praises contained in this *Haripāth* (Call To Prayer), not only his lips but his whole body becomes pure. (2) He is in possession of the power of austerities without end, and enjoys an everlasting life in *Vaikuṇṭha* (Vishnu's heaven) for ages together (lit. *kalpa*). (3) From him his mother, father, brothers and hosts of relatives obtain the form (four-armed like Hari) of Vishnu. (4) Says Dnyāṇdev 'I have received into my hands this profound knowledge through my *guru*, Nivrīti.'

18 (1) He who devotes himself to the reading of *Harivamsha Purāṇa* (i. e., the Purāṇa that relates the story of Hari's lineage), and sings loudly the name of Hari (God), ignores everything aside from Him. (2) He who thus praises Hari (God), he acquires *Vaikuṇṭha* (Vishnu's heaven) and gains the same as if he had visited all the sacred bathing places. (3) But he who follows merely the whim of his mind loses all this gain, blessed is he who steadies himself in this *Haripāth* (Prayer To God). (4) Says Dnyāṇdev 'My sole delight is in Hari's (God's) name I ever find happiness in the form of Rāma Krishna.'

19 (1) The cream of everything is in Nārāyan (God), therefore repeat His names, the *Vedas* and *Shāstras* are the authority for this (2) Unless they are in the name of Hari (God), all repetitions of every other prayer, all austerities and all religious deeds, simply worry a man's life and are of no use. (3) Those who are taken up with the repetition of Hari's (God's) name are as happily situated as the bumble-bee is when hunting after honey, it is shut up in a flower (4) Says Dnyāṇdev 'The repetition of Hari's name is my mystic *mantra* it is my powerful weapon, and at its sight *Yama* (the God of death) does not think of visiting our family line.'

20. (1) The repetition and singing of Hari's (God's) name is the chief duty of the servants of Vishnu, for thereby their millions of sins are destroyed. (2) Hari's (God's) name

alone has the value of austerities performed in former births without number all things become easy by repeating Hari's name. (3) The yoga practices the performance of sacrifices the rules of morality and *mayā* which is the outcome of unrighteousness, all disappear by the repetition of this *Hariṣāth* (Prayer To God) (4) Says Dnyāndev Aside from Hari I know of no sacrifices, moral laws, or religious observances.

21 (1) No special time is needed to repeat God's name, and the repetition of it saves both the family lines, the maternal and the paternal (or saves both parties present, the repeater and the listener) (2) The names 'Rama Krishna destroy all sins. Hari is the one saviour of all dull souls. (3) Hari's name is the cream of all Who can describe his fortune whose tongue is busy with the divine name? (4) Says Dnyāndev I have well completed the *Hariṣāth* (repetition of Hari's name) and I have thus made the way to *Vaikuṇṭha* (Vishnu's heaven) easy for my ancestors.

22 (1) A man who has the regular rule of repeating God's name is hard to find but the Husband of Lakshmi (i. e. Hari) is near to one who does so. (2) He who is constantly repeating Nārāyaṇ Hari Nārāyaṇ Hari the enjoyment of prosperity and the four forms of Final Deliverance are in his house. (3) Know that without Hari life is but hell The soul of such an one is the guest of *Yama* (the God of death) (4) Says Dnyāndev I lovingly asked my *guru* Nivrīti as to the extent of God's name He replied that it was wider than all ethereal space.

23 (1) The combination of the seven sense organs, the five vital airs and the three *gunas* (qualities) by their union make Hari manifest as the one substance (Brahma) (2) But the name is not like that It is superior to all other ways. It requires no serious effort to repeat it (3) Some resolve to repeat God's names as they inhale or exhale but that requires a special effort. (4) Says Dnyāndev Life without the name

of God is useless, therefore I have walked the path of Rāma Krishna.'

24. (1) In repeating God's name, in the performance of austerities, in religious deeds, in regular ceremonies, and in the observation of laws, Rāma is seen in everything, if one's heart is sincere (2) Therefore do not abandon sincerity ; put away all doubts, and continually shout aloud the names of 'Rāma Krishna' (3) Discard ideas of caste, prosperity, family, ancestry, character and reputation, and worship with devotion and reverence (4) Says Dnyāndev. 'Rāma Krishna is the object of my contemplation, and ever present in my mind. By this means I have prepared a home for myself in *Vaikuntha* ( Vishnu's heaven )'

25 (1) God does not think whether the repeater of His name is knowing or ignorant. The continual utterance of His name brings Final Deliverance (from rebirth). (2) Where the names of 'Nārāyan Hari' are sounded, there *kalī* and *kāla* cannot enter (3) The true conception of God is unknown even by the *Vedas*, then how can it be known by mere ignorant creatures? (4) Says Dnyāndev. 'The fruit of my repetition of Nārāyan's name is that thereby I have created *Vaikuntha* ( Vishnu's heaven ) everywhere on earth'

26 (1) Hold firmly in your heart the name of the one substance ( Brahma ), and Hari will feel compassion for you. (2) The names 'Rāma Krishna Govinda' are very easy to repeat, and they should be repeated with emotion without delay (3) There is no other substance than that of repeating His name. Any other path will doubtless lead you needlessly astray. (4) Says Dnyāndev 'I silently repeat Hari's name in my mind, holding the rosary in my heart, I continually repeat Shrī Hari's ( God's ) name.'

27. (1) All *shāstras* unanimously declare that there is sweetness in God's name, therefore, do not be idle for a single moment (2) All this earthly life is of a false nature, without

Hari one has needless rebirths. (3) Repeat the *mantra* of God's name a million times that will wipe out all sins. So make a firm resolve to repeat God's names. (4) Know your true self viz. the soul break the bonds of *mayā* and do not identify yourself with sensual pleasures. (5) Put sincerity into all acts of religion, into your bathing at sacred places and into religious rites. By means of compassion peace and pity make Shri Hari (God) your guest. (6) Says Dnyander. My *guru*, Nivrutti is my authority for the knowledge of the life-giving power of the *Hari-path* (the name of God)

28 (1) There are twenty-eight verses in the *Hari-pāth* (Call To Prayer) Dnyander has composed them in faith. (2) In repeating it continually on the banks of the Indrayani river he thereby became entitled to all spiritual things. (3) One should have a peaceful and a concentrated mind, and repeat the name of Hari with a joyful heart. (4) Then at the time of death and in times of distress, Hari will care for him, in both his outward and inner needs. (5) Saints and good people have gained an experience of this. But how can the idle and the dull minded be saved? (6) Says Dnyander. It was my *guru* Nivrutti who out of love gave me this knowledge, and I am pleased thereby

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## PART FOUR APPRAISAL

### CHAPTER XIII

#### THE 'DNYĀNESHVARĪ' ITS NAMES, MANUSCRIPTS AND COMMENTARIES

##### 1. The Names Given To Dnyāneshwar's Great Poem

There are literally hundreds of commentaries on the *Bhagavadgītā* in the various Indian languages. Some of these commentaries are named after the writers, some from the line of exposition adopted, while some have distinctive names given by the commentators themselves. As Mr Amrith Bāpūjī Rasāl of Ahmednagar, to whom we are indebted for the statements in the following paragraphs numbered (1) to (4), points out in *Dnyāneshwar Darshan* ( vol. 1 part 2, p 161 ), the Marāthī commentary written by Dnyāneshwar on the *Bhagavadgītā* has four different names given to it ' *Dnyāndevī*, ' *Dnyāneshwarī*, ' *Bhāvārtha Deepikā* ' ( 'Lamp of Faith' ) and ' *Gītā-Artha* ' ( on which see below ) The fourth name comes from Dnyāneshwar's usage and he has other usages also.

##### (1) ' *Dnyāndevī* '

Some commentaries are named after their writers by the simple device of adding ī after their names, hence the two titles of Dnyāneshwar's ( or Dnyāndev's ) book, *Dnyāndevī* and *Dnyāneshwarī*. The poet Dnyāneshwar calls himself by the name Dnyāndev in this his Marāthī commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*, in his *Amṛtānubhav*, and in hundreds of his *Abhangs*. But neither in these well-known writings nor elsewhere does he use the term *Dnyāndevī*, nor is this title found in the books of his brothers Nivrattināth and Sopāndev, or of

his sister Muktābāi. In writings contemporary with Dnyāneshwar himself his great work has such names given to it as *Commentary on the Gīta*, *Prākṛit Commentary* (i. e., a commentary in the vulgar tongue, or the current language of the people) the *Mārāṭhī Gīta* and the *Deśhī Commentary* (or commentary in the language of the country). Namdev, however, who used to go on pilgrimage with Dnyāneshwar, experiencing with him the *bhakti* at Pandharpur and co-operating in the work of helping the ignorant by preaching and by *kīrtans* has in his *Gāthā* (*abhang* number 992) plainly called Dnyāneshwar's great work by the name *Dnyāndeṣi*. This particular title thus comes down from Namdev's time though the title *Dnyāneshwarī* is oftener used both by Namdev and the Poet Saints after him.

## (2) *Dnyāneshwarī*

This name is never found in the great work itself nor in any of the books written by the members of Dnyāneshwar's own family. On account of his unique qualities as a writer Dnyāndeṣ was given the name of Dnyāneshwar, hence the title *Dnyāneshwarī* was given to his greatest work, and this same title is ascribed to it by Nāmdev himself and the poem was thus referred to in his day. By the time that Eknāth appeared nearly three centuries later Dnyāneshwar's great book had survived the age of Muslim persecution and when Eknāth produced his careful edition of it as stated in the five well known verses which he added at the close (see pp. 274-5), he used the title *Dnyāneshwarī* no less than three times using indeed no other title. Thus did the title *Dnyāneshwarī* become well established.

## (3) *Bhāvārtha Deepikā*

Though this third title is not found ascribed to Dnyāneshwar's poem by Dnyāneshwar himself nor by Nāmdev or Eknāth, it would appear to have come down from one of Dnyā

neshwar's own contemporaries, Visobā Khechar, who uses this title in one of his own *abhangs*. It is a title which would appear to be more weighty and full of meaning than the other two titles, for when used by Dnyāneshwar himself the word *Bhāv* conveys the significance of the hidden meaning or secret of the mind. Thus the great poem becomes a 'lamp' (*deepikā*) which throws light on the secret of the *Bhagavadgītā* for those who are painfully lingering in the darkness of ignorance. Indeed it is worthy of note that at the conclusion of some editions of the *Dnyāneshwarī*, such as Āthalye's edition, Sākhare's edition and the Nīrnayasāgar edition, there appear Sanskrit words which mean 'up to this point the *Bhāvārtha Deepikā* comes.' But (i) since these words do *not* appear in *other* old editions of the *Dnyāneshwarī*, such as Rājwāde's edition and Bhide's exposition, it would seem clear that the words cannot be Dnyāneshwar's own, for had they appeared in the original copies Dnyāneshwar was so revered that none of the original words would be likely to get dropped since every word of his seems to have been guarded so jealously. Moreover, (ii) in the *Dnyāneshwarī* poem itself the term *Bhāvārtha Deepikā* does not appear. Indeed, (iii) is it likely that the author, who had expended all his powers in order to set forth in the Marāthī language of the people the meaning of the *Bhagavadgītā*, would at the close lapse into the Sanskrit which was not understood by the populace? (iv) Nor did Eknāth, three hundred years after Dnyāneshwar, use the title *Bhāvārtha Deepikā* with reference to the *Dnyāneshwarī*. On the contrary he uses the latter term three times over in the five special verses he wrote at the close of his exposition (see pp 274-5). Therefore is it likely that he would describe the same poem by a different title, i. e., by the term *Bhāvārtha Deepikā*, though this expressive term had come to be accepted by several ancient writers? Moreover (v) this title of *Bhāvārtha Deepikā* is the title of a commentary by one Shrīdhara on the *Bhāgavata Purāna*, a

commentary published before Dnyāneshwar's day and therefore must have been well known to Eknāth. It is extremely improbable that the title of an earlier book by this Shridhar would have been given by Eknāth to a later book by Dnyāneshwar

#### (4) *Gītā Artha*

At the conclusion of his illuminating Marāthi essay Mr Amrith Bapuji Rasal maintains that wherever Dnyāneshwar himself refers to the *Dnyāneshwarī* he describes it by the word *Gītā Artha* a term which by several quotations from the poem itself is shown to mean that which is easy to be understood.

#### (5) *A Marāthi Gītā*

Finally Dnyāneshwar himself has described his greatest work by various terms such as An *ovī* composition on the *Gītā* a poetical Marāthi *Gītā* a composition or Prose (i e., non metrical) *Gītā* etc. In his Marāthi article on the *Dnyāneshwarī* contributed to the *Dnyān Kosh* or *Marāthi Encyclopaedia* Prof S V Dandekar emphasizes this same fact viz., that the poet himself did not give any name to his great work, but contented himself with stating that he had simply given Marāthi form to the *Bhagavadgītā*. Prof. Dandekar stresses the following important considerations drawn from the long and influential history of the *Dnyāneshwarī* the name *Bhavārtha Deepikā* (*The Lamp of Faith*) given to this poem in later centuries is not found in the poem itself nor in any of Namdev's poems, nor is this name used in any edition of the poem contemporaneous with Eknāth in the 16th century nor for 150 years later still. All this leads Prof Dandekar to the conclusion that for 450 years no particular name of any kind was given to this first great poem of the Marāthi language. Another consideration to be borne in mind is that the poem is not a textual commentary on every word of



the *Bhagavadgītā* but aims at giving its purport (*Bhāvārtha*). The textual commentary was supplied by Vāman Pandit whose date was the latter part of the 16th century and who died in 1678. Vāman's poetic commentary on the *Gītā* is rightly called *Yathārtha Deepikā*, signifying a word for word commentary on the *Gītā*, and Prof Dāndekar suggests that someone may have given the name *Bhāvārtha Deepikā* to the 1290 poem by way of contrast to Vāman Pandit's later production.

## 2. Manuscripts Of The 'Dnyāneshwarī'

As stated in the foregoing paragraph, the Marāṭhī article on Dnyāneshwar's great Marāṭhī poem, the *Dnyāneshwarī*, in volume 21 of the *Dnyān Kosh* or *Marāṭhī Encyclopaedia*, was contributed by Professor Shankar V Dāndekar, Professor of Philosophy in Parashurām Bhāu College, Poona. After dealing with the question of the date of the poem, pointing out that there is no reason for doubting the usually accepted date of A. D. 1290, as indicated in the verses at the close which are found in all editions, including Prof. V K Rājwāde's Mukundarāj edition, and having set forth his view on the name of the poem (see preceding paragraph), Professor Dāndekar enters upon a discussion of the various manuscripts and editions available. Unfortunately the original copy, written at the poet's dictation by one named Sacchidānanda Bābā, as stated in the last verse, has not yet been found. The manuscript editions may be divided into pre-Eknāth and post-Eknāth, or pre-sixteenth century and post-sixteenth century, the testing principle being supplied by the five verses written by Eknāth in the year 1584, fifteen years before Eknāth passed away. Even by the close of the 16th century many impurities had crept into the text, and it was only by dint of much labour that even Eknāth was able to decide upon an intelligible text. Professor Rājwāde contends in the introduction to his edition of the *Dnyāneshwarī*, to

which he gave the name of the Mukundaraj edition that it is a better text, as being truer to the original than is the text given in the edition by Eknāth one of his main reasons being that this particular edition contains one hundred and four verses less than Eknāth's edition (see R. D. Ranade's *Mysticism in Mahārāshtra* pp. 37-8) There were already fifteen printed editions when Prof. Dandekar wrote his article and the number promised to grow These editions differ as to the number of verses, the Niloba edition containing 10,000 verses and the Mukundaraj edition 8,892, says Prof. Dandekar though Prof. R. D. Rānade puts the latter figure at 8,896. The remainder of Prof. Dandekar's article summarizes Dnyāneshwar's teaching This is done for English readers in Prof. Ranade's notable book on *Mysticism in Mahārāshtra* and in Prof. N. R. Phatak's lectures which we have summarized on pages 118-136 See the whole of our chapter \

### 3 Commentaries On The Dnyāneshwarī

The situation regarding the various commentaries on the *Dnyāneshwarī* is thus summed up by Prof. Ranade on page 477 of his book — The *Dnyāneshwarī* the greatest work in Marāṭhi on mystical philosophy composed by the Saint Dnyāneshwar has been edited by various writers, prominent among whom are Sakhare Kunte, Madgaonkar Rajwade and Bankatswāmī Sakhare's edition of the *Dnyāneshwarī* gave the first Marāṭhi translation of that great work, and appeared in a revised form in 1915 from the Indira Press, Poona Kunte's edition printed at the Nirnayasagar Press, Bombay and revised in 1910 is a very handy edition and though it does not contain any translation of the work as a whole it has still some good footnotes and is very serviceable for original study Madgaonkar's edition, 1907 was planned on a more ambitious scale. The different readings were cited in the footnotes, and an attempt at a glossary of the terms appearing in the *Dnyāneshwarī* was made by the editor after a compar-

tive review of the meanings of the same words appearing in different contexts in different parts of the said work. Rājwāde's edition ( Dhulia, 1909 ), which was intended to give a redaction of the *Dnyāneshwarī* earlier than that revised by Eknāth, contains a good introduction on grammar, and a second attempt was made by him to produce a glossary of the difficult words occurring in the *Dnyāneshwarī* on the aforesaid pattern. The latest work on the *Dnyāneshwarī* is that of Bankatswāmī, who, in collaboration with a number of scholars, has produced a Marāthī translation of the *Dnyāneshwarī* which will necessarily repay close study. A complete English translation of this greatest work in Mahārāshtra Mysticism, the *Dnyāneshwarī*, is badly necessary, and let us hope that it is produced at no very distant date. In that way, the entire *Dnyāneshwarī* may be made available to English readers. It will interest the reader to know that in preparing this present work for the press, when we were comparing the English translation of the 18th ( the last ) chapter in the *Dnyāneshwarī* with the original Marāthī written by Dnyāneshwar, in our corrections we sought to ensure that the translation by Dr Abbott and Pandit Godbole given on pages 142-275 was a combination of the interpretations given in the Marāthī commentaries by Sākhare (pp. 706-867) and Bankatswāmī ( pp 644-787 ).

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## CHAPTER XIV

### DNYĀNESHVAR A BRIDGE BETWEEN TWO ERAS

#### 1 Ceremonialism Of Pre-Dnyāneshwar Days

In closing section 5 on Hindu Renaissance Periods in our first chapter we ventured to express the opinion (see p. 7) that Dnyāneshwar's distinctive religious contribution may have been a real factor in the fifth period of Hindu Renaissance by providing materials in his books for the great *bhakti* reaction against the formalism of a moribund philosophy. This means that Dnyāneshwar's personality and teaching constitute a bridge of passage between one Hindu religious era and another. This is confirmed by Mr Trimbak Gangadhar Dhaneshwar of Ahmednagar who, writing in the Ahmednagar Marathi treatise on Dnyāneshwar states (page 172 of *Dnyāneshwar Darshan* vol. 1) that in order to grasp the true significance of Dnyāneshwar's achievement a glance at the preceding history is necessary. After the Aryan *Rishis* had become settled in India they effected such changes in religion as were needed by the existing conditions. The liberal minded among these *Rishis* made an effort to include in Hindu society the non Aryans. As for the people themselves in course of time the belief became established among them that the way to God was the *Karma Marga* by which was meant that neither earthly nor spiritual happiness could be obtained apart from sacrificial offerings and ceremonial ritual. Therefore for centuries ceremonial was the order of the day and the slightest deviation made the whole system valueless. One result was that those who observed the appointed ritual despised those who did not. Then came Gautam Buddha who established his principles thereby maintaining loyalty to the original Aryan faith and doing away with these ceremonial developments. In his view

all men were equal and he quickly won the multitudes to his view, obtaining also royal patronage and bringing in what proved to be a new form of the Hindu religion. Every hundred years or so the Buddhists held a Conference about their religion, the first being called by King Ashoka about the year 200 A D. The second was held by Kanishka and after his Conference no more seems to have been held, with the consequence that the Buddhist religion became stationary, as no fresh research was being made regarding the principles of Buddhism or the authority on which Buddhism was based.

## 2. Formalism And Literalism Of The Contemporary Religion

Similarly Jainism sprang from Hinduism, the point of the Jain reformers being largely the same as that of the Buddhists, that too much emphasis was being placed on sacrifice and ritualistic practices. The chief tenet of Jainism has always been *Ahimsā* which in recent days has been so widely popularized by Gāndhījī. In course of time, however, both Jainism and the Buddhists became as lifeless and formalistic as the contemporary Hinduism. The authority for this statement is Dnyāneshwar himself who affirms in the *Dnyāneshwarī*, chapter 13, verses 234-235, that some Jains drink water only after straining through a cloth, lest they should kill an insect and thereby commit *himsā* or murder, but they forgot that while straining the water through the cloth they actually killed the insects, thus committing the abhorred *himsā*. Others of them, continued Dnyāneshwar, for fear of *himsā* neither cooked nor boiled their food, thereby starving, and thus overlooking the fact that in such an act they were guilty of a grave form of *himsā*. In this way Dnyāneshwar showed that the noble word *ahimsā* had lost its spiritual meaning because of the sheer literalism of its devotees. Dnyāneshwar made very clear therefore that the Jain religion had entered on the same road of degeneration as the contemporary Hinduism.

### 3 Dnyāneshwar's Literary And Moral Reform

Prof S. N. Chāphekar, M. A., LL. B., of Poona has pointed out in the second part of volume 1 of *Dnyāneshwar Darshan* page 375, that all good literature can be decided by three tests first, its appropriateness for the time in which it is written secondly the great qualities of the author and of his literary merit as shown by his subject and language and thirdly the entire manner of his presentation. Tested by these three proofs Dnyaneshwar must be regarded as a great author. In Dnyaneshwar's day there was an exaggerated importance given to the knowledge and literal understanding of Sanskrit books, while the great principles of the *Vedas* and other sacred books were never explained to the common people in a way calculated to be understood. High sounding words were used with the result that the common people were confused and perplexed. Exaggerated importance was also given to ritual observance. Then appeared Dnyaneshwar who produced a work which in the simple but effective language of the current vernacular enabled the ordinary folk to understand the lofty *Vedas* in words they could grasp. Not only so, but Dnyāneshwar taught that just as by the *Dnyān Marga* (that is the way of knowledge) so also by the *Bhakti Mārga* (that is the path of sincere devotion) could *Moksha* (salvation as then understood) be obtained. In this way Dnyāneshwar created in the common people such a desire and hope of salvation that concerning many of his day Dnyāneshwar could say as Dr Macnicol so felicitously renders his words in English

'So dear the path of *bhakti* they despise

The great Release

Moreover Dnyāneshwar also planted in the soul of Mahārāshtra's national life the seed of loyalty to God practical good behaviour and honest daily living. In short, he laid the foundation for moral reform among Mahārāshtra's people.

#### 4. Dnyāneshwar's Genius

Dnyāneshwar's greatness as an author is indicated and explained in part by the greatness of the family from which he sprang, all of whose members, Nivrattināth, Sopāndev and Muktabāi, were themselves writers of no mean order. The fact which is accepted by all the authorities, that the *Dnyāneshwarī* was completed before its author died at the very early age of 22, as seems to be indicated by the most reliable evidence, or 25 as one line of possibility would seem to show, is one of the most impressive proofs that Dnyāneshwar must have been a genius of unusual kind. Indeed the generally accepted date of the *Dnyāneshwarī* (1290 A. D.) makes its author only 16 or 18 years of age at the time, and the utter absence of any evidence of a longer life for so great a genius as Dnyāneshwar is one of the most astonishing aspects of a life marked by other astonishing features. In the 320-page Marāthī book we have referred to on pages 72-76, Mr M. D. Altekar expresses doubts concerning the reliability of the tradition that Dnyāneshwar composed his unique poem so young. In whatever way this point is settled, Mahārāshtrian scholars believe that one sure way of measuring Dnyāneshwar's greatness is to compare him with Shankarāchārya. Just as the latter in the ninth century had changed the face of Indian religion before he passed away at the early age of 32, so had Dnyāneshwar before he passed away possibly ten years younger.

#### 5. Dnyāneshwar Lays Foundations

When we apply to Dnyāneshwar the third test mentioned above we are reminded of the saying so common all over Mahārāshtra that the *foundation* of Marāthī religion and literature was laid by Dnyāneshwar, and that the *summit* is to be seen in Tukārām. What that religion and literature were as presented by these men, and what they meant to the common people, both these aspects were eloquently set forth by the late Sir Nārāyan Chandāvarkar in a series of seven delightful

articles in the daily *Times of India* and later reprinted in a booklet of thirty pages in 1912 under the title *The Heart of Hinduism*. Sir Nārāyan began by quoting the remark of the German critic Herne, directed against German philosophers, that the moment a religion solicits the aid of philosophy its ruin is inevitable. But the reason Hinduism survives, said Sir Nārāyan despite its frequent though changing appeal to philosophy is that Hinduism, as we now see it, is not one religion but many a mixture of creeds and a cult of compromises. Writing on what he called the dignity and the degradation of Hinduism Sir Nārāyan went on to say that within the fold of Hinduism itself the fallibility of the *Vedas* and the degradation of idol worship have been proclaimed and asserted by large bodies of men who yet are acknowledged Hindus. Showing how

Hindus baffles definition, Sir Nārāyan went on to quote a *Shāstrī* friend who was steeped in the dialectics of the master mind, Shri Shankarachārya, and who observed "The fact that people do not agree in their definition of Hinduism points of itself to its all comprehensiveness. Hinduism continued the *Shāstrī* baffles all definition like Brahma (god) whom it worships. The ancient *Rishis* sought to define Brahma as *This* and *That* and failing ended by defining *Brahma* as "Not This or That

## 6 Mahārāshtra's Religious Decline After Dnyāneshwar

After Dnyāneshwar's day the religious and moral condition of Mahārāshtra gravely declined and even the *bhakti* faith, once fervent and simple and sincere, now became irrational, superficial and hypocritical. This was the sad state of things to which the message of Tukārām Rāmdās and Vāman Pandit was addressed in the seventeenth century. Concerning the life-work for their people of Tukārām (with his *Abhangs*) and Rāmdās (with his *Dāsbodh*) see volume 7 and 8 in this Poet Saints Series. Vāman Pandit was born at Bijāpur in



1615, seven years after Tukārām and Rāmdās who were both born in 1608. It was not until some time spent on pilgrimage and in Sanskrit research that this profound scholar dedicated his great powers to Marāthī literature. Then he produced a literal translation of the *Bhagavadgītā* and called it *Samashlok Gītā*, then a full exposition of the *Bhagavadgītā*'s teaching which he called *Yathāṛtha Deepikā* (or *True Commentary*), as contrasted with Dnyāneshwar's great work often called *Bhāvārtha Deepikā* (or *Suggestive Commentary*). For the common people of the Marāthā race Vāman Pandit did a notable work, though too frequently he descended to a low and vulgar, occasionally even obscene, level in his writings. See our pages 26-27. After a great life's work Vāman Pandit died in 1678. Mahārāshtra's later religious developments and present-day tendencies lie beyond our present purview.

## 7. The 'Wārkarī Sect'

One of the greatest factors in spreading the devotional flavour of Dnyāneshwar's *bhakti* spirit in Western India during the past six or seven hundred years has been a religious sect called the *Wārkarīs*, said to have been founded by Dnyāneshwar during the thirteenth century. By the term *wā* is meant a time, a day, a season, *wāṇī* means a periodical pilgrimage, and a *Wāṅkarī* is a time-keeping pilgrim who regularly goes on pilgrimages to such places as Alandī (Dnyāneshwar's birth-place). These *Wāṅkarīs* have probably been the chief factor in the popularizing of Hindu *bhakti* (or devotion) in Western India. They have been notable throughout their long history for their 'preaching of equality' and have thereby provided what the official *Bombay Gazetteer*, volume 20 of 1885 (which see), described as 'a valuable counterpoise to Brāhmin domineering' in the history of Mahārāshtra. How these *Wārkarīs* have achieved this, who they are, and what the principles which have enabled them to provide Mahārāshtra with an effective offset to Brāhmin exclusiveness, are questions we have answered in our *Life And Teaching Of Tukārām* (pp 170-3).

## CHAPTER XV

### DNYĀNESHVAR'S PHILOSOPHY OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

#### 1 Dnyāneshwar An Out And Out Monist

In a learned chapter on Dnyāneshwar's Philosophy the different schools of thought concerning *Advaita* are set forth by Prof S V Dāndekar M A., from page 10 of Volume 2, Part I of the Marāṭhī work entitled *Dnyāneshwar Darshan*. According to Prof Dāndekar Dnyāneshwar is a *Pūrṇa Advaitist* that is, a non-dualist completely or in other words a Monist out and out. Shankarācharya's philosophy is nowa days often called *Keval Advaita* but from one point of view this description of Shankarācharya's philosophy as contained in the word *Keval* (only or solely) does not sufficiently explicate Dnyāneshwar's view to which Prof Dāndekar therefore gives the term *Pūrṇa* (complete) *Advaita* or Monism pure and simple e.g the *Dnyāneshwarī* says in Chapter 13 verse 949 'Nothing exists but Spirit. Unfortunately says Dāndekar there is attached to Shankarācharya's expression *Keval Advaita* the meaning that it is only after the whole of the material elements in the universe have been removed that Spirit alone exists. From Dnyāneshwar's standpoint, however says Prof Dāndekar this is altogether inadequate as an explanation of Dnyāneshwar's *Pūrṇa Advaitism* a doctrine of complete non-dualism, or Monism pure and simple, which alone can explain satisfactorily the meaning of the words 'Spirit alone exists'.

#### 2 Dnyāneshwar's Monism ( Advaitism ) Defined

Dnyāneshwar's *Advaitist* view is set forth by Prof. Dāndekar (on his page 10) in Marāṭhī which we render as follows

There is only One Spirit, Supreme and Alone That Supreme Spirit takes to Itself clothing from the infinite variety of form seen in the universe around us. From the great Shiva down to the smallest blade of grass, or from the Supreme Brahman to the creeping ant, there pulsates One Spirit. It may ever be said that the idea of the One Spirit is so supreme as not to tolerate the idea suggested in the words that this Supreme Spirit fills the world, since that very confession would convey the idea of dualism. The one and only idea that must be held in the mind is that the sole existent reality is Spirit, All-Dominant and Alone. In two brief pages Prof Dāndekar traces the *Advaita* idea from Vedic times and then states Shankarācharya's position in half a verse 'Brahma alone is truth, the world is illusion, the individual soul is the Brahman, and there is nothing else'. It was after Shankarācharya had wandered all over India, arguing with the Buddhists of that time, with those belonging to Mīmāṃsā schools of thought, and with those holding the Sāṅkhya philosophy, that he (Shankarācharya) put forth his *advaitist* view. It was because Shankarācharya was confronted everywhere by the existing views that his works have upon them such a controversial stamp. This also explains why one particular aspect of Shankarācharya's *Advaitist* philosophy seeks to prove the non-existence of matter and the falsity of the world, as J A Mackenzie (quoted by Dāndekar) says 'Agnosticism is a kind of alembic whereby matter is first dissolved in mist to reappear as something that is more nearly akin to spirit'.

### 3 Dnyāneshwar No Slavish Follower Of Shankarācharya

Dnyāneshwar must have had before him Shankarācharya's commentary on the *Bhagavadgīta*, says Prof Dāndekar, who holds that Shankarācharya's date was 788-820 A D. This is also Dr S K Belvalkar's opinion as given in his *Vedānt Philosophy* of 1929, though other opinions are held about

Shankarāchārya's exact date (see page 13 in *Dnyāneshwar Darshan*) Professor Dandekar maintains (on pages 14-15) that Dnyāneshwar was not a slavish follower of Shankarāchārya, and on page 15 he gives reasons why Dnyaneshwar developed his own view on the whole subject of *Advaita*, supporting his position by five quotations, two being taken from Dnyāneshwar's *Amritanubhav* two from his *Dnyaneshwari* and one from his 65 verses to Chāṅgdev usually referred to as *Chāṅgdev Pasashiti*. On page 25 in the first paragraph Prof Dandekar recapitulates the difference between Dnyaneshwar's *Pūrṇa Advaita* and Shankaracharya's *Keval Advaita* and he says for substance: So far we have discussed Dnyaneshwar's full *Advaita*. Now let us look at the connection between *Pūrṇa Advaita*, *Keval Advaita*, *Vishishtā Advaita* and *Shuddha Advaita*. We have already seen the relation between the *Keval Advaitism* of Shankaracharya and the *Pūrṇa Advaitism* of Dnyaneshwar. Both these men were full *Advaitists* except that one of them, Shankaracharya, accepted the idea of non-existence in order to refute the errors held by others. The result of this was the tendency among some of Shankaracharya's followers to accept the principle that non-existence was to be regarded as being on an equality with the One Spirit. But to Dnyaneshwar the only possible *Advaita* that could be accepted was in its pure form and there is no objection in saying that from one standpoint Dnyaneshwar has revived the teaching of Shankaracharya but in an independent form.

#### 4 Dnyāneshwar's Essential Monism Compared With Rāmānuja's Dualism

On the difference between the *Pūrṇa Advaita* of Dnyāneshwar and the *Vishishtā Advaita* of Rāmānuja Prof. Dandekar (on page 35) holds there is no similarity whatever. Rāmānuja is a *Vishishtā Advaitist* because he holds to multiformity but Dnyāneshwar is a Monist pure and simple. This had previ-

ously been made clear on page 13 where Prof Dāndekar expressed the opinion that the view held by Rāmānuja was really a dualistic view, though he has come to be accepted under the name of non-dualist. No doubt there is a vital place given to *bhakti* in Rāmānuja's scheme of things. But this *bhakti* permanently divides the Absolute into various parts, just as if a mother were to cut up her own child into several pieces and thereby destroy it. Resuming on page 25, Prof Dāndekar says that to a merely superficial and external point of view there appears a similarity between Dnyāneshwar and Rāmānuja on two issues, viz., their examination of non-existence and their method of refuting it. But between Rāmānuja and Dnyāneshwar, Prof. Dāndekar holds there is one very clear difference, that while both doubt non-existence, Rāmānuja becomes a dualist and Dnyāneshwar remains a pure Mohist, the only point of agreement between the two being their inability to accept the idea of non-existence. As for the remaining aspects of their two philosophies there is a world of difference between them.

## 5. The Difference Between Dnyāneshwar And Vallabāchārya

On the same page Prof Dāndekar discusses the *Pūrṇa Advaita* of Dnyāneshwar and the *Shuddha Advaita* of Vallabhāchārya. To a superficial observer these two views might appear to be very much the same, yet Vallabhāchārya became a *Shuddha Advaitist*, while Dnyāneshwar became a *Pūrṇa Advaitist*. In reality there is no similarity between their two philosophies. For on the one hand Vallabhāchārya considers Krishna who was the son of Vasudev as the Supreme Spirit, and he advocates what is called the *Pushti Mārga* (probably a special term for *Bhakti Mārga*), the goal of which is to offer to your *guṇu* your body, mind and wealth. On the other hand, though Dnyāneshwar is a devotee of the same Krishna, yet the *bhakti* of which he speaks is related to that

Supreme Spirit who transcends *guru* place and time, as Dnyāneshwar shows in his *Amṛtānubhāv* (I\, 37) by a striking simile that the god outgrows his temple. This means a *bhakti* which has such a view of the divine as to transcend all idea of time and place. Thus the distinction between the *bhakti* of Vallabacharya and of Dnyaneshwar is a difference as wide apart as the two poles.

## 6 The Spiritual And The Intellectual Combined

On page 9 of his essay on Dnyaneshwar's philosophy Prof Dandekar divides mystics into two classes. Both classes have acquired the joy of spiritual experience, but those belonging to the first class quite ignore all scientific discussion on the subject and its practical application to life while those of the second class have an equally real experience but do not give up all enquiry or research. It was to this second class that Dnyāneshwar belonged. He knew by personal experience the full force of the Hindu philosophical expression I am That but in addition there was in Dnyaneshwar a unique combination of spiritual experience and of intellectual penetration, so that all one-sidedness was avoided. Prof Dandekar points out on page 17 the further interesting aspect of Dnyaneshwar's *Advaita* or non-dualistic philosophy that it is based wholly on personal experience. This fact is far reaching in importance. For Dnyāneshwar is no atheist despising the *Vedas* a point there is no need to develop, though worthy of mention. It is wellknown that he had the highest reverence for the *Vedas* as *Shrutis* which means that he regarded the *Vedas* and the Upanishads as being revealed truth. Prof. Dandekar emphasizes as all important his opinion that though Dnyaneshwar had this profound reverence for the Hindu Scriptures (literally the *Shrutis*) yet he had attained to this position by virtue of an independent personal religious experience, consistently regarding the *Vedas* from the sole point of view of inward spiritual life.

## 7. The 'Experientialist' To Whom Personal Religion Has Final Authority

Three points of literary and religious significance are emphasized by Prof Dāndekar on page 17 of the essay referred to. *First*, while this personal and independent aspect of spiritual experience occasionally appears in the *Dnyāneshwarī*, yet since that work is a commentary on another work, there is no great scope for developing this personal aspect of the subject. *Secondly*, this personal mystical basis of Dnyāneshwar's entire *Advaita* philosophy is made clearer in Dnyāneshwar's own *Amritānubhav* where in the 3rd chapter and the sixteenth and seventeenth verses, by way of confirming his own view held independently, Dnyāneshwar quotes the statement of the two Hindu deities Krishna and Sadāshiv. Now the remarkable point is that immediately after Dnyāneshwar has quoted these instances of the two Hindu gods, his own personal experience is given supreme prominence by bubbling over in the words of the *Amritānubhav* iii, 18 which can only mean, 'But please do not infer from my quoting the words of Shiva and of Vallabha ( a synonym for Vishnu ) that it is because I follow them that I maintain this view. Not at all, for even had these two deities not said so, I should still have maintained the position from my own experience.' *Thirdly*, Prof Dāndekar points out on page 18 that Dnyāneshwar quotes from the *Mundaka Upanishad* a verse to the effect that all our experience of the world is simply due to Brahma's own experience in and through us. But in *Amritānubhav* x, 18 Dnyāneshwar makes the comment that the ten *Upanishads* cannot go any further than this, for even they can describe the experience in negative terms only, since the experience after all, is inexpressible, hence, says Dnyāneshwar, 'I have therefore taken the deep plunge into the direct experience itself.' In view of this state of things in Dnyāneshwar's writings, Prof Dāndekar feels justified in giving the name of 'Experientialist' to Dnyāneshwar as a mystical philosopher in

*Hinduism.* On this all important point of Dnyāneshwar regarding his own religious experience as possessing authority of a final character Prof Dāndekar quotes on page 18 two of Dnyāneshwar's lines from the *Amṛtānubhāv*, chapter 7, verse 290

### 8. Intellectual Mysticism of Dnyāneshwar

This has been well summarized in Part I pages 25-179, of Professor R. D. Rānade's noble volume of 494 pages entitled *Indian Mysticism: Mysticism In Mahārāshtra* published in December 1932 as volume seven in the *History of Indian Philosophy*. This able work was issued under the patronage of the University of Bombay. The outline scheme of the great series of which it formed a part was first announced in December 1918 by that notable savant of the East who lived in Poona, Dr Sir Ramakrishna Gopāl Bhāndārkar who gave the scheme his warm approval. Professor R. D. Rānade's volume has been rightly pronounced 'a masterpiece. His definition of mysticism is that it is a 'silent enjoyment of God, or a direct, immediate, first hand, instinctive apprehension of God. An appreciative, though wisely discriminating review of this able book from the Christian standpoint appeared from the pen of that missionary scholar the Rev Alexander Robertson in *The National Christian Council Review* of October 1933 and one from the Hindu standpoint by Mr V V Deshpānde in *The Mahrāṭṭā* English columns of August 13 1933 which pleaded for 'a more detailed examination of the philosophy of the *Bhāgavats*. Mr Deshpānde entered a caveat, as we think justly against the idea of the *Gopīs* being supposed to have enjoyed Shri Krishna in their mystical realization.



## CHAPTER XVI

### A GREAT MAHĀRĀSHTRIAN ON THE SECRET OF THE 'GĪTĀ'

#### 1. Bāl Gangādhār Tilak's 'Gītā Rahasya'

August 1st has been notable for two decades past as the date when there breathed his last that towering Mahārāshtrian and All-India leader, Bāl Gangādhār Tilak, the Chitpāvan Brāhmin who passed away at the age of 64 on August 1st 1920 in Bombay City. We were living in Bombay at the time and can never forget the vast crowds that assembled for his cremation on the sands at Chowpātī not far from Wilson College. B. G. Tilak has unjustly been described as a mere demagogue. Those who do him that injustice forget that he was founder and editor of the *Kesari*, the most popular vernacular newspaper in the Marāthī language with a present-day circulation twice a week of over 22,000 copies. They forget also it was his aggressive genius that first brought about the union between politics and Hinduism which has made Patriotism itself a religion in India. This may be regarded by some as a doubtful benefit to India, but if it be true that Deccan Brāhmins are the most militant in India, it is due largely to B. G. Tilak who thus became a foe to be respected by all who differed from him. Sir Valentine Chirol called him 'the father of modern Indian unrest,' but his greatest claim on the affection of religiously minded India is his acknowledged success in expounding and applying to modern conditions the message of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the message Dnyāneshwar first put into Marāthī in his *Dnyāneshwarī*. This 'far-famed' scripture of India's people has had countless tributes paid to it and it is largely because B. G. Tilak spent his years in prison preparing his exposition

of the sacred book of educated Hindus that his name is so enshrined in India's heart. Though he wrote several other books, Lokamānya Tilak's own fame as an author will rest on this great Marāṭhi work of nearly nine hundred pages entitled *Gītā Rahasya*, a title which means *The Secret of the Gītā*. This immense work has owed much of its popularity to the fact that it was written by B. G. Tilak when he was in prison at Mandalay from 1908 to 1914 for activities and methods which the Bombay High Court in a famous trial pronounced seditious. When he was released in 1914 he astounded the world by commending the justice of the British cause in the war of 1914-18 to his fellow Indians, a fact which was no small factor in rallying India to the side of the Allies. After he had put the finishing touches to his book it was published in 1915. Twenty years later in 1935, the first volume of the English translation was published and was followed a few months later by the second volume the two reaching a total of nearly 1,300 pages. The English work bears the double title *Gītā Rahasya or the Science of Karma Yoga*. This English translation reflects high credit on the translator Mr B. S. Sukthankar M. A., LL. B. a Bombay High Court Solicitor. Like the first edition of the original Marāṭhi work the English translation was first published in an edition of 10 000 copies and up to 1935 there had been five Marāṭhi editions, seven in Hindi, two in Gujarāṭhi and one each in Bengālī, Kanarese, Telugu and Tāmil.

## 2 Critical Edition Of The Mahābhārata

The Song Of The Blessed, as the title of the *Bhagavad gītā* is translated into English is the name of the religious and philosophic poem of nine hundred Sanskrit verses which is inserted as an episode in the sixth book of the almost encyclopaedic *Mahābhārata*. We wonder sometimes how many people are aware of the fact that for over two decades there has been in process of preparation in Poona City a

critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* of which 40,000 *shlokas* (or verses) have thus far been published at a cost of nearly three and a half lakhs of rupees. This is one of the greatest literary enterprise in the history of the world's literature and is in charge of the Director and Chief Editor of the Bhāndārkar Oriental Research Institute, Dr. V S Sukthankar, the brother of B. G. Tilak's English translator. It is an impressive demonstration of the culture and learning in present-day India to be permitted to visit the Bhāndārkar Oriental Research Institute in Poona and to see the array of Sanskrit pundits at work on the thousands of different renderings that are found in manuscripts of the *Mahābhārata* including the *Bhagavadgītā* with a view to producing an authoritative edition of the greatest epic of India, and indeed, one of the greatest of all time.

### 3. Krishna's Advice To The Dejected Warrior

In our war-stricken world it is worthy of note that the *Bhagavadgītā*, which is far and away India's most treasured scripture, has a war situation for its setting. The hostile but closely related clans of the Kauravas and the Pāndavas, after years of disputes, were facing each other in open combat on the Kurukshetra (or plain of the Kurus) reputed to have been not far from the site of the modern Delhi. At this critical point in the *Mahābhārata* story it is that Krishna is represented as preaching the *Gītā* to Arjun, the famous archer of the Pāndavas because he hesitates to begin a fight with near relatives. Let us here quote, but abbreviate, B. G. Tilak's dramatic description of the scene. 'When Arjun began to see who had come to fight with him, his next of kin, relations, friends, maternal uncles, paternal uncles, brothers-in-law, and realising that in order to win the kingdom of Hastināpur, he would have to kill these people, and thereby incur the greatest of sins, the destruction of one's own clan, his mind suddenly became dejected. If he fought, it would be a fight with his own

people and thereby he would incur the terrible sin of killing his ancestors preceptors, and relatives and if he did not fight he would be failing in his duty as a warrior. The *Loka māyā* continues. Arjun was indeed a great warrior but when he was caught in the moral net of righteousness and unrighteousness he felt faint his hair rose on end the bow in his hand fell down and he suddenly flopped down in his chariot crying "I shall not fight! I do not wish to enjoy that happiness which is steeped in the blood of my own relatives killed in warfare, and burdened with their curses. It is true the warrior religion is there, but if on that account I have to incur such terrible sins as killing my grandfathers, brethren or preceptors, then may that warrior religion and warrior morality go to perdition. If my conscience does not consider it proper to commit such terrible sins, then however sacred the warrior religion may be of what use is it to me in these circumstances? When in this way his conscience began to prick him and he became uncertain as to his duty and he did not know which path of duty to follow he surrendered himself to Shri Krishna, who preached the *Gītā* to him and make him take up the fight. This is the book of which Gāndhījī said twenty years ago that the *Gītā* is an allegory in favour of the doctrine of non resistance. No wonder *The Indian Social Reformer* said of Gāndhījī's view. This is sheer casuistry.

#### 4. Gāndhījī And India's Gītā Jayantī

For the past sixteen years every December has seen in many parts of India the *Gītā Jayantī* or *Gītā Celebrations*. Fearing the results of such celebrations Gāndhījī wrote in December 1926 as follows. The idea of a *Gītā Day* and the manner in which you want it observed does not appeal to me at all. What is more I do not agree with the interpretation you have sought to put upon it. Referring to this letter from Gāndhījī, Mr G V Ketkar who is

Secretary of the *Gītā Dharma Mandal* in Poona, said in an article in the *Mahrāṭṭā* on December 22, 1939. 'It was natural for Gāndhījī who is so keen on preaching and advocating unalloyed *Ahimsā* to feel that the *Gītā Jayantī* would perhaps unduly emphasize the setting of war in which the *Gītā* has been revealed' Mr. Ketkar added 'The setting of the *Gītā* has proved very awkward for many in the past. It must continue to be so for many at present and in future too. One may wriggle out of that awkward fix by any tortuous and circuitous reasoning. But one cannot tear the *Gītā* out of its context, however much one wishes it. It will be wrong also to go to the other extreme and so to magnify out of all proportion the significance of the warlike setting of the *Gītā* as to overwhelm and submerge its main theme. This main theme is not war, but duty in general which might include even war at times, war not of your choice but one forced on you by others.' The *Gītā Dharma Mandal* of which Mr. G. V. Ketkar is the secretary is a society founded in 1924, its chief article of faith being 'the Philosophy of Action' expounded by Lokamānya Tilak as his secret key to unlock the mysteries of the *Bhagavadgītā*. During its 15 years the *Mandal* has spent over Rs. 30,000 on its various activities. Hindu authorities have concluded that the day on which Krishna was reputed to have preached the *Gītā* was at a time which comes every year in the month of December, hence the annual *Gītā Jayantī* at that time. This is not the place to discuss in full the correctness or otherwise of Lokamānya Tilak's interpretation and application of the *Gītā* message. Suffice to say that he has had his able critics among his own people.

## 5. The 'Gītā' A Poor Defence Of War

Consider for a moment the view of another able Hindu contemporary. In an article entitled 'Stray Thoughts,' in *The Indian Social Reformer* for April 12, 1941, its former editor, the veteran social reform leader, Mr. K. Natarājan, had

the following striking lines — My feeling towards war is much the same as that of Arjun on the battlefield of Kuru kahetra. The social demoralization and the functional confusion resulting from war are a tremendously high price to pay for its illusory benefits. The *Bhagavadgītā* as an apologetic of war has always seemed to me to be unsatisfactory. Shri Krishna's arguments urging Arjun to fight belong to the category of begging the question. "It is un-Aryan, infamous, not to fight. Your friends will point their finger of scorn at you. If you die in battle you go to heaven if you emerge victorious out of it you have the whole world at your feet. Your enemies have destroyed themselves by their misconduct, you are but the instrument to execute the doom of Nemesis. The attempt throughout is to hypnotize the clear-eyed Arjun into precipitating himself into the fight. The events as recorded in the *Mahābhārata* itself show beyond the shadow of a doubt that Arjun's fears all came true. The sequel of the war and the victory was a wholesale demoralization of the Hindus from which they never recovered. The *Gītā* as a metaphysical and ethical treatise has a high value but it is very poor stuff as a defence of war. My friend Professor J. B. Pratt of Williams College, one of the leading American authorities on Indology has, in his article in the *Vedānta Kesari* drawn largely upon the *Gītā* for ammunition against the anti-war attitude. But he is obliged finally to resort to the same question begging tactics as the *Gītā*. Those who are against war he says, are simply trying to save their skins. Perhaps he is right but some of these men have faced heavy odds in their life-long fight against social wrongs. It is generally admitted that physical courage is a comparatively more common quality in men than moral courage.

## 6 Hinduism And National Movements

No one who has taken the trouble to go through the massive work by Lokamānya Tilak on the secret of the *Gītā* :

message whether in the 1,300 English pages, as we have done, or in the nearly 900 Marāthī pages in Marāthī, will not desire to withhold any meed of praise from the author of so great a work. But there is another side of the picture, and the historian may well ask whether the rabid and nation-destroying 'communalism' of the recent decades in India may not have been fostered in great part by the new 'Philosophy of Action' which B. G. Tilak had already emphasized long before he set it forth in the pages he wrote at Mandalay. (Early in January this year, 1941, Mr. Rāmchandra Rāo, newly appointed to represent India in South Africa, urged all students to remove the word 'communalism' from their dictionary.) Unfortunately the Lokamānya's welding together of Hinduism and politics was not always on the highest moral levels. This has been one reason for the widely misinterpreted impossibility of Indian Christians identifying themselves with such 'national' manifestations so called, resulting in many Indian Christians being unjustly charged with 'denationalization' on many occasions, whereas very often it was nothing but high Christian principles that compelled their abstention from such idolatrous forms of 'national' celebrations. An example sufficient to illustrate this is one supplied by the life of Mr. B. G. Tilak himself who made the worship of Ganpati a rallying centre for the patriotic zeal of India's educated youth, when the songs sung at these Ganpati festival aimed at deepening the passion of their patriotism.

## 7. Casuistry And National Righteousness

Some of the newspaper articles appearing at the time of celebrating the Lokamānya Tilak anniversary show that the weaker side of this great man is still influencing many people. Therefore we hope it will not be thought amiss for us to warn Indian leaders regarding the danger of imitating that weaker side. For it is sometimes forgotten that one of the Lokamānya's favourite Sanskrit texts was to the effect that

in politics we should do to others as they do to us, and that one of his vernacular proverbs meant that 'any stick is good enough to beat a dog with'. Dr Macnicol once went so far as to say that B. G. Tilak's was the voice of the Indian casuist, and we have it on the authority of Gāndhījī that in talk with him the Lokamānya would frankly and bluntly say truth and untruth were only relative terms, but at the bottom there was no such thing as truth and untruth. It was this poisonous doctrine that lay at the root of much of B. G. Tilak's defective Nationalism. Writing in the *Dnyānodaya* of February 22, 1923 Dr Macnicol applied these things as follows:

There is no greater injury that anyone can do to India in the political sphere during the present formative period of her public life than to suggest that it is expediency and not righteousness that exalteth a nation. These counsels of worldly wisdom if they become the guiding principles of any people's life, will bring to her a *swarāj* which will inevitably mean dishonour and a lowering of the whole level of thought and aspiration.

## 8 Misapplication Of The Gītā

What this kind of thing has meant in the linking together of patriotism and idolatry becomes clear when it is remembered that Ganesh or Ganpati is the most popular deity in the villages of India where certain idolatrous celebrations are among India's greatest curses. Nor was it only that the Lokamānya fostered idolatry for the life-record of the author of the *Gītā Rahasya* is sadly marred by his fierce opposition to the noble moral effort represented by the Age of Consent Bill in 1890 which was introduced to mitigate the indescribable wrongs and sufferings of Hindu child-marriage. His influence as proprietor of the *Kesari* was seen in his use of its columns to denounce as renegades and traitors to Hinduism all those Hindus who supported this crying need of Indian social reform, though it was happily placed on India's statute-book as an Act



in 1891. In an article reviewing the past 'fifty years' in the realm of social reform, *The Indian Social Reformer* of September 7, 1940 said that Mr. B. G. Tilak 'objected to the holding of the Indian National Social Conference in the same pavilion as the Congress because the Conference had supported the Age of Consent Bill of 1890 and advocated social reforms which (in Tilak's Judgment) were calculated to weaken the political movement by creating splits in the community and giving a handle to opponents. This was in 1895' Nor was this all For B. G. Tilak misused and misapplied his great powers by stating in public that 'the Divine Krishna teaching in the *Gītā* tells us we may kill even our teachers and our kinsmen,' and that people should 'rise above the Penal Code into the rarefied atmosphere of the sacred *Bhagavadgītā*.' Such things as these were followed by his arrest on June 24, 1908 and to his six years' imprisonment. Happily we can add on the authority of *The Indian Social Reformer* of September 7, 1940 that 'the Lokamānya in his later years shed his antipathy to social reform and reformers and even cooperated with them to some extent.'

## 9. Subordination Of Ethics And Social Reform To 'Patriotic' Politics

Nevertheless for anyone who would understand India's political and social reform developments in the closing decades of the last century and the first decade of the present century, a knowledge is essential of the historic combats between the casuistical methods of the Lokamānya B. G. Tilak and the noble ideals of that selfless worker Gopāl Ganesh Āgarkar who died much too young in 1895. After breaking with the Lokamānya, Āgarkar founded and edited an Anglo-Marāthī paper called *Sudhāarak* (or 'Reformer') and he was one of a mighty trio of whom the other two were such giants as M. G. Rānade and G. K. Gokhale who championed the cause of India's women in the passing of the Age of Consent Bill

referred to above. This the Lokamānya opposed ostensibly on the plea that it was intolerable that a foreign Government should force such a piece of legislation upon a subject people but who though he posed as such a fervently Orthodox Hindu, in reality considered religion merely as a means of firing the masses with enthusiasm for his own cause which was, first and last, political, since with the Lokamānya ethics were subordinated to patriotism. These are the words of that sympathetic writer on Indian politics Dr H C. E. Zacharias in his *Renascent India* (pages 50-51) who for a fruitful period edited the weekly *Servant Of India*. Those who would like to pursue these matters in detail should consult Mr M D Altekars Marathi Life of Āgarkar of whom Mr R. G. Pradhan states that 'if the cause of social reform has made greater progress in the Deccan than in any other Province, it is due largely to his teachings' (*Indias Struggle For Swarāj*, p. 69). In pointing out these things we are far from implying that casuistical methods are employed only by Hindu leaders such as the Lokamānya, for it is well to remember what Lord Ponsonby said in 1932 in his book entitled *Falsehood In War Time*. In war time failure to lie is negligence, the doubting of a lie a misdemeanour the declaration of truth a crime. When war is declared, truth is the first casualty.

## 10 Problem of the Historicity of the Bhagavadgītā' Narrative

It is not a pleasant affirmation to make concerning so notable a work as the *Gīta Rahasya* by Lokamānya Tilak, but almost every reference made to the Bible in this book of such widespread influence is wrong in its interpretation and some of the cases are surprising and almost unpardonable in so great a scholar. An even weaker aspect of the Lokamānyas exposition of the *Gītā* is his failure to deal with the question of the historicity of the narrative in the *Mahā*

*bhārata* of which the *Gītā* forms a part. Not only is it that 'there is no reference to Krishna in contemporary foreign literature,' but many great investigators have been driven to the conclusion which was expressed by the leading scholar in the East, the late Dr Sir R G Bhāndārkar, who stated on the occasion of his inaugural address when opening the Bhāndārkar Institute at Poona in July 1919 that 'the occurrences reported in the *Mahābhārata* cannot be regarded as strictly historical.' This has been expanded by that great Brāhmo Samāj scholar of Calcutta, Pandit Sitānāth Tattvabhūshan, as follows 'Krishna's historicity as a religious teacher is more than doubtful.' After speaking of the 'fictitious nature of the *Mahābhārata* story, specially of its central figure, Krishna,' the Pandit went on to say 'As to Krishna, his relation with the main story of the *Mahābhārata* is slight, and in the original narration of the war he may have been quite absent. . The temptation to invent a god or to develop and popularize a god, already receiving worship from some people, was very great. The secret of the spread of Buddhism must soon have been found out by the Brāhmins. It was the position of Buddha as the central figure in his religion.' Pandit Tattvabhūshan concludes by affirming that 'the earlier Vaishnavas knew Krishna was not historical.' To this statement of the Calcutta Brāhmo Pandit in 1920 we have never seen any answer. The gravity of such a position we point out on a later page.

## 11. Beauty And Inadequacy Of The 'Gītā'

It would, however, be blindness and sheer prejudice to refuse to acknowledge 'the beauty and power' of the *Gītā* which Prof A. A Macdonell truly says 'is unsurpassed in any other work of Indian literature' The *Gītā* as literature is rightly highly praised. Then how shall its religious and spiritual value be appraised? Has this greatest religious book of India any contribution to make to those who are learning the lessons of life in the school of Jesus? The present writer honestly be-

lieves it has not and his reason for such a belief will be found in chapter XXVI beginning from the word '*Secondly*' in the section on 'The Secret of Certitude' and in the section entitled '*Historically Trustworthy and Ethically Satisfying*'

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## CHAPTER XVII

### INDIAN CHRISTIAN APPRAISAL

#### 1. Poem Of Dedication To Dnyāneshwar By Mrs. Venūbāi Modak

The following is an English translation of the beautiful dedicatory poem found at the opening of the first volume of the Marāthī work entitled *Dnyāneshwar Darshan* presented to the assembled company at Nevāsa on the occasion of the 1934 celebrations.

- ( 1 ) I bow in salutation to Dnyāneshwar.
- ( 2 ) I bow in salutation to the *Dnyāneshwarī* which teaches the secret of the *Bhagavadgītā*.
- ( 3 ) So may the world be blest by tasting the nectar of this service of the Lord
- ( 4 ) I bow in love to the *Amṛtānubhav* where God is seen as a Cloud of Mercy
- ( 5 ) Dnyāneshwar wrote his loving verses to Chāngdev in explanation of the identity of the divine and the human.
- ( 6 ) Dnyāneshwar's *Pāsashtī* ( his 65 verses ) to Chāngdev convinced his mind of the truth of the *Vedānta*, and won his obeisance.
- ( 7 ) Devotion to the Lord is the means of salvation and I bow to the *Haripāth* which implants the seed of this devotion ,
- ( 8 ) In order to save the soul in this world by making salvation easily obtainable.

- (9) I bow to thee Dnyāneshwar to thy brothers and  
thy sister
- (10) I bow to thy books, for by such obeisance my  
body and mind are blest.
- (11) You have set forth the ideal that serving God  
and serving man are one and the same thing
- (12) My one hope is myself to become thus blest by  
thus serving

This beautiful dedicatory poem by the well known Indian Christian lady of Ahmednagar invites the following comments — *First* it is altogether fitting and beautiful that an Indian Christian should thus closely identify herself with the Dnyāneshwar celebration at Navāsa in 1934. *Secondly* it is probable that the English meaning Mrs. Venubāi Modak would give in each line to the term I bow (*namana*) in this beautiful dedicatory poem is the same meaning which the late Nārāyan Vāman Tilak gives to the word in his *Christāyan* (Chapter 1, verse 54 etc.) where the prince of Marāṭhi poets uses the word (*namana*) in the sense of salutation as distinct from the deeper significance of worship. That this is Nārāyan Vāman Tilak's meaning is clear from his words in Chapter 1 verses 77-78, also where he warns his readers against attaching the meaning of worship in relation to the Indian poets (Chapter 1 verses 107-109) and in relation to nature (Chapter 1, verses 54-76) etc. These verses have been rendered by J. C. Winslow as follows —

Next Nature, low to thee I bow

Prime utterance of the Lord divine,

Mirror in which His splendours shine,

First Mother and instructress thou

I 54

Think not I fondly dream that thou

A goddess art — ah! be not wroth —

One is the Lord we worship both

To Him in glad obeisance bow!

Now I salute the poet throng,  
 And before you in reverence lay  
 This my *Christāyan*, in what way  
 Soe'er He may inspire my song.  
 These are but love's upwellings, spilled  
 From my heart's fulness, more 'twere vain  
 To call them if as such ye deign  
 To welcome them, my task's fulfilled.  
 'Tis Christ that did these words impart,  
 Therefore let none to change them dare !  
 Most gladly would I rather bear  
 Your dagger planted in my heart !

I. 107-9.

*Thirdly*, worthy of note is the rarity from the Hindu standpoint of the idea conveyed by the eleventh line in Mrs Venūbāi Modak's dedicatory poem about 'service'. One of the most impressive addresses the editor of the present volume ever heard from the late Sir Nārāyan Chandāvarkar was one in which Sir Nārāyan urged upon Indian Christians in Bombay the point that the most unique contribution they could make to India would be to deepen and extend the spirit of missionary service they had already displayed in a great measure. A strange contradiction of this position may be found in the considered statement by the Shankarāchārya Dr Kūrtakotī in the work entitled *Dnyāneshwar Darshan* (volume 1, page 48, three lines from the bottom) where this Hindu authority curiously affirms that Westerners have never understood the real nature of religious experience and therefore have suffered much loss, that India's undue emphasis on religious experience has done harm to India by making it increasingly ascetic; and that Westerners have attained to material prosperity by forfeiting spiritual blessedness, while on the contrary India has ignored the prosperity by pursuing the religious ideal. To return to the ideal which Mrs Modak expresses as being set forth by Dnyāneshwar, this ideal has

unfortunately too often remained a mere ideal, as is shown by the fact that the Indian Pantheist or *Advaitist* had until recent years done but little towards the uplift of his countrymen whereas the Theistic section of reformed Hinduism seen in the Prārthanā and Brāhmo Samājists have for many decades rendered most commendable social service. It is therefore the imperative duty of all reformed Hindus and Indian Christians to ally themselves with national and cultural movements for the uplift of their own country as did the late Nārāyan Vāman Tilak (see Winslow's book *Nārāyan Vāman Tilak, the Christian Poet of Mahārāshtra*) and the late K T Paul (see Popley's *K T Paul Christian Leader*) and a host of others.

## 2 Ganpatrāo R. Navalkar On Dnyāneshwar's True Devotee

In 1885 a booklet of 30 pages entitled *The True Devotee Described* was published by the well known Indian Christian Grammarian the Rev Ganpatrāo R. Navalkar consisting of *Extracts From The Dnyāneshwarī* with an English translation and explanatory notes. The preface stated that it was a translation of the portion of the *Dnyāneshwarī* prescribed for the Sixth Standard originally prepared for the benefit of some students, but now published for more extended usefulness. We give parts of Mr Navalkar's Introduction as follows —

### (1) *Dnyāneshwar Not Obtruse Or Pedantic*

Dnyāndev or more popularly Dnyānoba, flourished in the thirteenth century of the Christian era, and spent the greater portion of his life in Ālandī a village 13 miles from Poona. His principal work is the *Dnyāneshwarī* a didactic commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* of great ethical merit. It abounds in archaic forms, like the poems of Chaucer and is consequently little read by any but devout and earnest students but its thoughts are neither abstruse nor paradoxical, nor does the author attempt to clothe them in pedantic phraseology. He is



an ardent devotee, too earnest to trifle with words and expressions, and anxious to communicate to his readers the rich ore he has dug out of the mire of the *Gītā*, unquestionably the most influential work of Aryan devotion and speculation.. Hence his language is natural and simple, and the archaic forms, which occur plentifully in it, were household words, universally intelligible in the day when he wrote. Not a few of them are still found in the speech of those Marāthī races which have not been much affected by Muslim influence, and the language of the conservative tribes of the Konkan, which may be regarded as quite a distinct dialect, owes its peculiarity to the presence of the very same words in it. Some of the later poets, carried away by an excessive passion for the classical authors, degenerated into pedants, and the language lost in their hands much of its native simplicity and force'

### (2) *Dnyāneshwar's Condemnation Of Idolatry*

'The *Dnyāneshwarī* though avowedly aiming at explaining the *Gītā*, does not confine itself to a simple elucidation of its tenets. It gives even its most transcendental speculations a strongly moral turn, and boldly enunciates its own teaching without any regard for the utterances of others. Popular superstitions are sometimes most mercilessly assailed, and idolatry is exposed in language that recalls the irony of the Hebrew evangelical prophet.'

### (3) *An Educational Text-Book*

'Tukārām and Dnyānobā should be more largely studied in our schools, both Vernacular and Anglo-Vernacular, than they are at present, and thus, it might be hoped the Sanskritization of the Marāthī language, which means its utter ruin, would in some measure be retarded.. For the purpose of the diffusion of knowledge among the masses, Sanskritized Marāthī is utterly useless, the populace cannot be influenced by words of learned length and thundering sound, impotent to set the ideas they embody in a clear and tangible form before the eye of the

uncultured mind. It is simple and striking words and expressions, homely in origin but instinct with life and power, as they proceed fresh and warm from a breast sincere and earnest that are so influential. We would therefore in conclusion say to Marathi students. Drink deep at the fount of Marathi pure and simple as you find it in the *Abhangs* of Tukarām and the *Oṛīs* of Dnyāndev and you shall then assuredly be able to imbibe their spirit and emulate their power of effective utterance." In addition to this warm appreciation of Dnyāneshwar's poetry, there is in the foregoing some excellent advice on the use of Marathi which is just as necessary as it was over half a century ago. Then follow translations into Mr. Navalkar's beautiful English of selections from the 12th and 13th chapters of Dnyāneshwar's great poem enumerating such virtues of the true devotee as humility, modesty, mercy (including the walk, speech and heart of the merciful man), forbearance, rectitude, worship, love, service, purity, steadiness, self-restraint, spiritual mindedness and impartiality.

### 3 Christa Sevā Sangha Review Contribution

In its issue for June 1931 *The C S S Review* had an illuminating article of over ten columns on Dnyāneshwar contributed by C. A. Tulpule from which we quote three sample sections to which we have supplied the titles —

#### (1) *Dnyāneshwar's Catholicity of Spirit*

The *Gītā* recognises the principle that there are stages in man's development and also that all men are not and cannot be on the same level of mental evolution. The greatness of human conception would lie not in disregarding these different states, but in taking note of them and evolving and realising the essential religion which will be based upon the broad basis of this multiple experience co-ordinated. For whatever the differences in manifested man, the unmanifest is always the same. To find out this One in the many has been the ancient

quest. "That which is One is styled in many ways by the learned." The really learned would be he who knows the One that underlies the many. Dnyāndev's catholic creed provides for this difficulty.'

(2) '*Chāṅgdev Pāsashtī*' And The '*Haripāth*'

'To bring out the futility of mere learning and the practice of Yoga without attaining Release, Dnyāndev addressed sixty-five verses, known as the *Chāṅgdev Pāsashtī*, to a great and proud sage named Chāṅgdev, who was reputed to have lived fourteen hundred years. But in all his long life he had not forgotten the *Ego*, had not understood that all life, all form, is the manifestation of that which is beyond Life and Form. These sixty-five verses written in the style of the *Amritānubhav* explain how all men should be treated as being sparks from the same eternal fire. For the daily prayer of his followers Dnyāndev has written the *Haripāth* and the *Abhangs*. These hymns, forming during these hundreds of years the daily prayers of millions of simple Marāthā agriculturists of all castes, have had a tremendous influence upon the national life of Mahārāshtra, so much so that the religion of the land can be said to be the religion as propounded by Dnyāndev. One has but to hear the cry of "Dnyāndev ! Tukārām !" emanating from a million throats at the annual *Āshādhī* and *Kārtikī* fairs to see the impress they have left behind'

(3) *Gāndhījī's Indirect Debt To Dnyāneshwar*

'Not only Mahārāshtra but all mediæval India resounded to Dnyāneshwar's cry. There is hardly one great name in the religious life of the land that did not derive its inspiration from him. Narsī Mehtā, whose song "He should be called a Vaishnava, who knows the pain that others suffer" is always on the lips of Gāndhījī, was a disciple of Dnyāndev. Kabīr, the great saint of Central India, drew his inspiration from the same Gorākshanāth, who was also the *guru* of Gahinī, the

*guru* of Nivrīti. The same philosophy the same practice, seems to have been in vogue in all ardent souls in the India of that day with local variations. Such was the great epoch ushered in and typified by Dnyāndev

### 3 Mr Cyril Modak On An Early Marāthā Saint

In the *Guardian* of Madras for July 23 and 30 1931 Mr Cyril Modak contributed two articles from which we take the extracts below though our quoting them must not be construed in every case into approval

#### (1) A Religious Revivalist

Brave like the Rajputs, noble like the Greeks, the heart of the Mahārāshtra people is untainted with vice. I am not unconscious of a few blots on the character of the Marathas but there are black sheep in every community. The Marāthas are pre-eminently a martial people. But their zeal and emotion were disciplined by Poet Saints like Dnyāneshwar and Tukārām and religious preceptors like Ramdas. Men and women flocked from hundreds of miles away regardless of the weariness, the trouble and the pain of long trudging pilgrims now and not fighters to the shrine at Pandharpūr. Dnyāneshwar was among the first of these religious revivalists.

#### (2) Revolt And Reformation

This religious revival in part a revolt against caste distinctions and Brāhminical oligarchy in part a reformation of social abuses a unification of sectarian differences, was meant to arouse the religious instinct of the people and draw them in one bond of love, at the door of one shrine of devotion under the banner of truth. At the age of twenty two, in the full prime of youth, Dnyāneshwar obeyed the summons to the Eternal Peace. Within a year his brothers and sister followed in his wake. Whom the gods love die young said the old Greek, and he spoke truly

### (3) *Dnyāneshwar's Hymns*

'Turning to Dnyāneshwar's hymns we see the profound devotion that surged within his soul. In a cry of ecstasy he tells us that every joy is found in his Lord. Nor does it seem right to think that Dnyāneshwar is thinking of the Vithobā image of Pandharpūr, for, in his chief, and as I believe, his only authentic work, the *Dnyāneshwarī*, the name of this image is never mentioned nor is there even a passing reference to "Vithobā." It is probable, then, that the poet is thinking of a beatific vision of his Lord. He goes further. He believes in the immanence of God in the heart of men, but only the pure in heart see Him. To this end he advises men to seek the company of saints and to have the Lord's name ever on their lips.'

### (4) *Indian Mysticism And The Divine Name*

'We find that the poet combines the names of Rāma and Krishna and thinks of the twain as one. He thus makes a precedent which was followed in the 14th century by Kabīr. He certainly felt the necessity of one incarnation and thus seems to look upon Rāma and Krishna as one. It should be understood, however that so much stress has been laid by Indian mystics on "the Name" principally for two reasons—It is convenient to conjure up a form by the mention of the Name and this serves as an object for mental concentration. However it be, Dnyāneshwar says that the remembrance and recitation of the Name is a means of salvation. Tulsīdās, in the 17th century, preached a similar doctrine. Both were all but completely misunderstood. Not a mechanical uttering of "Rāma" was what Dnyāneshwar aimed at, but the uttering of the dear Name of the "Beloved," which caused a stir of devotional feelings and raised the one who uttered it to a realm of joy.'

### (5) *Dnyāneshwar And Indian Pantheism*

'It has been said by Mr Rānade, "Dnyāneshwar appeals to the pantheistic tendencies of our people's intellect, while

the charm of Tukārām and Nāmdev lies in their appeal to the heart. This verdict has been used to play at cross purposes with the same critic's true meaning. Although Dnyāneshwar had no definite theology which excluded pantheism, it may scarcely be just to cast away all the poet's writing with a gesture of righteous indignation. Dnyāneshwar did appeal to the mind and the reason. But he was a poet. Can it be said without contradiction that a poet appeals not to the emotion but to the reason? Dnyāneshwar was a thinker and his *Dnyāneshwari* a poetical commentary on the *Bhagavad gītā* bears testimony to the thinking power of the poet. Yet there is throughout it an emotional colouring the work of the poet within him.

#### (6) *Dnyāneshwar's Idea Of Sin*

It would be illogical to omit a reference to the idea of sin and the consequent feeling of degradation as treated by Dnyāneshwar particularly and his school in general. They never did seem to be weighed down with a consciousness of original sin. Their utterances rarely betray that utter despair that made the Hebrew prophets shrink from Jehovah at some moments. But this does not imply that these saints were libertines. For they were not. There are expressions of grief of sorrow of loneliness, and a sense of separation from the beloved. These moods may have been caused by passing consciousness of sin. But it never made them melancholy. On the other hand it drove them nearer God.

#### (7) *Rejected At Ālandī Now The National Hero*

'Whether we discover flaws in Dnyāneshwar's reasoning or not, whether he came to the level of the Hebrew prophets or remained far below whether his sentiments appeal to our "refined" taste or fail to do so, we can hardly deny that the poet of Ālandī was a prophet and a saint, and proved by his life and his teachings that he was worthy of these titles. The village that was once so pitiless to his parents and so unsym-

pathetic to himself now claims with an air of pride this hero of Marāthī literature. The greatest tribute that can be paid to a man is paid him when at every annual celebration at Pandharpūr, amid all the lights and perfume of worship, Dnyāneshwar is remembered, mentioned, honoured and his words explained. Though far in the background and only dimly discernible, his figure stands on the highest dais of national admiration, crowned with a people's love'

## 5 A Karhāde Brāhmin Pandit's Quest For Spiritual Peace

### (1) *A Diligent Student Of Dnyāneshwar*

In this study in Spiritual Freedom it gives us great satisfaction to refer to an example of India's growing religious toleration. On May 5, 1934, there was baptized at Mahābleswar by Father Winslow in the crowded Christ Church the well known Karhāde Brāhmin, Mr Nārāyan Lakshman Harshe, who from 1916 had been the leading Pandit of the Marāthī Language School of the Bombay Representative Christian Council. At our request he agreed to give us for this chapter 'his own statement on his religious faith'. Here it is 'My parents were Karhāde Brāhmīns and I received all the training of an orthodox Brāhmin boy. At the time of my Thread Ceremony I was entrusted with the sacred Vedic hymns and prayers. Every Brāhmin boy has the right to learn the Vedas and to repeat Vedic hymns and prayers after this ceremony has been performed. As I could not understand the meaning of the Sanskrit prayers, I asked my priest their meaning. He replied that he also did not know their meaning and that it was not necessary to know. He emphasized that although I did not know the meaning, God knew it and understood it. I should therefore perform the ritual morning and evening regularly and attentively. I did this but I was never satisfied. I wished I could say my prayers in Marāthī and tell everything to God as I would speak

to my mother my father or a friend. For many years this difficulty remained. On one occasion I went to the Prārthanā Samāḥ of Poona to see Justice Rāmde whom I had never seen or heard before. There I heard prayers in Marāṭhi. I was very pleased to hear those prayers in Marāṭhi for the first time and I liked the way in which they were offered. From that time I attended the Prārthanā Samāḥ being at that time a student. After a few years I became a member of the Prārthanā Samāḥ which I viewed as the highest form of Hindu worship, since it was free from idolatry and caste distinction. I got intellectual satisfaction and as far as reasoning and argument were concerned I was satisfied. But I found no scope for emotion. If I were sometimes in trouble or grief or overcome by temptation whom should I call upon and who would give me immediate help and relief? Such questions persistently troubled me. So I gave special attention to the *bhakti* *Wārkaris* (see p 298). There of course I found some superstition and idolatry and there was not much scope for reasoning or argument. Still I liked it for its devotion and the emotional aspect of its fervour and when I was in any difficulty or trouble, or when I was overcome by temptation I would call upon God and sing the Marāṭhi hymns and feel some comfort. Every day I attended the reading of the *Dnyāneshwarī* and the discourses upon it by Mr. Keshavrao Deshmukh, who is a great and learned devotee of the *Wārkarī* Panth in Poona. I enjoyed these discourses very much for the *Dnyāneshwarī* is a Marāṭhi commentary on the *Bhagavad gītā* the sacred book accepted by all Hindu sects. It aims at explaining the ultimate truth and reality by simple and beautiful illustrations. The lecturer every night made it so interesting and expounded everything in such an attractive manner that the audience felt they were in heaven. I myself experienced and felt the same for the time being. Then for a time I gave up the Prārthanā Samāḥ and began to observe the fasts and other special days of the *Wārkaris*. Days, months and



years passed in this way, but my trouble and my weakness were the same. I only felt happy when I heard the philosophical truth, and yet I never got any power from it over temptation or weakness. From my boyhood days I always had a liking for hearing religious lectures and in the John Small Hall in Poona I listened to Dr Macnicol's lectures and attended his Bible class. I also heard Dr Stanley Jones' lectures. About this time Father Winslow opened the Christa Sevā Sangha Āshram in Poona. I often went there and I received great help from Father Winslow, from Father Elwin and from other brothers at the Āshram. The Lord was leading me on by these means. I was fond of attending lectures by missionaries when I was a student, a Prārthanā Samājist, and a *bhakta* amongst the *Wārkarīs*. I also taught in Mission Schools and ever since 1916 I had been working as a Pandit in the Marāthī Language School for missionaries. This kept me in constant touch with the missionaries and I was always highly impressed by their character, their refined and cultured manner and their strong faith in Jesus Christ. But all the time I was under the influence of the *Bhakti Mārga* and the *Dnyāneshwarī*. I used to get peace of mind while listening to beautiful discourses on these but as soon as I left the lecture room and came downstairs the peace was gone, trouble, temptation and weakness engrossed me and made me unhappy.

## (2) *Personal Debt To The 'Dnyāneshwarī'*

Mr Harshe continues 'The *Dnyāneshwarī* has always been to me a work of the highest poetic excellence and in my own religious life I have realised how it captivates the mind and helps the reader to forget himself. He feels he is lost in the wonderful imagery, and he notes the marvellous choice of words, the similes and the illustrations. He finds nothing but sweetness all through, and in this way all his senses are held spellbound. This is why Marāthī scholars have always

derived such benefit from it, and as Dr Macnicol once remarked "This is a gold mine for the scholar". It is really impossible to find words to describe the literary beauty of Dnyāneshwar's verses which are so lofty that N V Tilak composed his great poem the *Christāyan* after the model of the *Dnyāneshwarī* of which the Christian poet was so fond to the very end of his life. I knew in Poona a well known Professor of Marathi Literature who was an agnostic, and who never acknowledged his debt either to God or to religion. But he was a great student of the *Dnyāneshwarī* which he loved deeply because he had never before found such poetry. A section in the *Dnyāneshwarī* that has always impressed me has been chapter XII Verses 144-163 where Dnyāneshwar gives the characteristics of a true *bhakta*. Here is how I would summarize it. "The true *bhakta* does not hate any person, either good or bad just as the earth never thinks of holding the righteous only and throwing down the evil man or just as water never thinks of quenching the thirst of the cow only while becoming poison to kill the tiger. The true *bhakta* is a friend alike to all he never knows the word 'I'. He never thinks of anything as his own. He is indifferent to sorrow or joy. He is happy and satisfied without getting anything from outside just as the sea is full without any shower of rain." Another section of the *Dnyāneshwarī* I have always specially enjoyed has been that on God realization in chapter VI verses 364-368 the meaning of which may be given as follows. "When the senses are controlled the mind automatically begins to see Brahma. it turns away from the object of pleasure and begins to see its own self the soul and while seeing like this, the mind recognizes its own real nature and begins to say 'I am Para Brahma. After such self realization the mind sits on the imperial throne of happiness and gets engrossed in eternal bliss. The mind thus becomes one with Brahma, to whom there is no superior and one who cannot be known by the senses." A third section that has always

administered to me, as it does still, is that in chapter II, verses 290-310, where the characteristic of a steady-minded man as given by Dnyāneshwar may be set forth thus "A man whose mind is not moved whatever calamities may befall him, anger and lust pass away from his thoughts, and fear never touches him. He never makes any distinctions but he is just as impartial as is the moon on the night of the full moon when it sheds its light upon everybody, on the good and on the bad alike. He loves all, and his mind never undergoes any change, he never feels exulted or depressed. Such a man is one who possesses a steady mind." Since Dnyāneshwar's poem sets forth such lofty sentiments, it is in no way surprising that I have always found the reading and hearing of the *Dnyāneshwarī* to be highly inspiring and encouraging. It gives delight and inspiration to the dejected and disheartened. When people are in difficulty or in distress the reading of the *Dnyāneshwarī* at once elevates their thoughts and feelings and takes them out of themselves. For each Hindu reader says to himself "Why should I worry when the All-Powerful and the All-Knowing God says such things to Arjun in the *Bhagavadgītā*? Have I not the same needs as Arjun? And the promises given to Arjun, are they not given to me? Just as the Almighty was with Arjun, so is He with me if my soul is rightly awake. If I am truly devoted to Him, not only is God near me but He is none other than my own soul, and if I realise that I myself am Brahma I shall not lack anything, but everything will be at my command." With such thoughts a man feels that he is no longer on earth but he feels he must be in 'heaven'.

### “(3) Wherein The ‘Dnyāneshwarī’ Is Inadequate

‘But when his reading of this great poem is over for the day, and the man finds he has to begin his practical life again, he feels his weaknesses and difficulties are still beyond his strength, in the rough and tumble of daily life he gets no

power to overcome his weaknesses but his difficulties and his worldly temptations all remain unconquered. Therefore, should anyone ask what I have found in the New Testament which I have not found in the *Dnyāneshwarī* I would say that in contrast with the *passing* joy that I have found in reading the *Dnyāneshwarī* the following words of Jesus have given me an *abiding* peace and a *constant* strength which I could not find elsewhere—"Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light (St Matthew 11 28-30) 'Let not your heart be troubled ye believe in God believe also in Me In My Father's house are many mansions if it were not so I would have told you I go to prepare a place for you. I am the Way the Truth and the Life no man cometh to the Father but by Me (St John 14 1-6) "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you" (St. Matthew 6 33) Any man who reads such words, with simple faith in Him who uttered them, will get an abiding peace of mind and a real power to overcome temptations for he feels he is sustained by the Living Presence of God every moment of the day. When anyone hears the expounding of the *Dnyāneshwarī* he is deeply impressed by the wonder of the poem its figures of speech, its similes, its allegories, and its wealth of illustration, and he feels he cannot withhold his admiration for the author and his astonishing ability especially when it is recalled that the accepted belief makes the poet to have been only 16 when this unique poem with its commentary on the *Gītā* was written by him. To show such genius at this age was truly a great wonder. But such admiration for the poet does not help a man in his daily life to overcome his faults and weaknesses. He derives much pleasure from listening to the poem but depression and defeat return afterwards. Though Dnyāneshwar's wonder'

ful command over language and his power of argument demonstrate his uniqueness among Marāthī poets, these facts are of little or no spiritual value in the practical everyday life of ordinary people. I have noted also that after practising *yoga*, the *yogī* feels happy and goes on with his dreaming, but unfortunately there are well known instances of *yogīs* who have been guilty of evil practices even after attaining the power of *samādhī*, the reason being that *yogic* powers are attained by artificial means and no real change thereby takes place in the heart or the disposition, moral weaknesses therefore remain, they have merely been suppressed, not cleansed away. But Jesus Christ enables a man to overcome his sins and temptations by means of inward help and a deep change of heart. In the words of St Paul in his Philippian letter ( 4, 13 ) "I can do all things through Christ who empowers me."

#### (4) *The Influence Of Jesus Christ*

'To resume my narrative. On many occasions I joined the "retreats" of the Christa Sevā Sangha and was introduced to Mr Madge who had started in Poona the House of Prayer. The prayers of the missionaries in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ helped me wonderfully. This was about the end of 1932 and the whole of 1933. During this period my household trouble was intense, as my only daughter was seriously ill at the St Margaret's Hospital for many months, and the lady doctors there felt her case so serious, after all their medical efforts, that they had no other resource left but to resort to earnest prayer. She was cured by their prayers, and when my trouble and pain were intense I offered prayer through Christ and my prayers were answered and my inward trouble was removed. As I reflect on my past religious life I can see that the Hindu Scriptures had given me much good teaching and had put me on the beautiful road which ultimately led me to Christ. The living personality of Christ, His humility, His love and His high standard of character, were the factors

which carried me to Him. So that while in my Hindu Scriptures I found much good teaching yet I never found there such a noble personality such a redeeming power and such a living Presence. The passages from the Bible which I have quoted above always impressed me greatly, and whenever I used to read those messages I felt the Lord Himself was speaking to me and I got power to overcome trouble and obtained full peace of mind. In October 1932 I therefore accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Redeemer and spoke about this to some of my friends, but I did not believe in the need of baptism then. Father Winslow therefore advised me to talk over this matter of baptism with the Lord Himself every morning in my private prayers. One morning while praying I came to feel that I would not get complete peace of mind unless I was baptised, and accordingly I spoke about this to Father Winslow.

### *(5) The Arguments Of Friends*

After much private conversation and prayer with me, Father Winslow put up a notice on the Mahableshwar Language School Notice Board on the Mahableshwar Christ Church Door stating that I was going to be baptised on Saturday May 5 1934. This news spread all over Mahā blesbwar where the Chiefs of Indian States and other Marāthā Princes usually stay during the hot season. Among these there was great excitement when they heard the news that an educated Brāhmin was going to be baptised and they felt they must do something to prevent it. The Rānīsāheb of one Marāthā Prince (as she did not wish her name to be known I do not divulge it) called my two sons and asked them why their father was becoming a Christian. She further inquired if there were any household difficulties or any trouble about money. My sons replied that their father was accepting Jesus Christ not on account of any trouble but because he had strong faith in Him. She then asked, "I wonder what kind of faith

is that. Will you ask him to come and see me? I just want to know the faith which makes your father give up his own religion at this age" Accordingly I went to see the Rānīsāheb. Receiving me very cordially, she said, "I heard your daughter was seriously ill and that the doctors were hopeless and had no other remedy but to pray and that she was cured by prayer; and so this made you trust in the power of Christ." I replied, "Whenever I pray to Christ He always helps me and removes my inward troubles. Not only so, but He gives me a peace of mind which I never had before." The Rānīsāheb then said, "There is sickness and every other kind of trouble even in our royal families and we trust Pāndurang and are devoted to Him and He removes our trouble. Don't you think He will remove your trouble?" To this I answered, "I am sorry to say my trouble got to such a point that I lost my peace of mind." To this the Rānīsāheb replied, "We are descendants of the great Shivājī and we are protectors of Brāhmins and cows. You are a learned Pandit and a respectable Brāhmin and we are very sorry that you are forsaking our religion. If there are any difficulties just tell us, we have money at our disposal and power to remove them, we will do anything and everything for you." I replied that I had no such difficulties but that I warmly thanked the Rānīsāheb for the interest and kindness she had shown. When I was leaving, the private secretary (of the Rānīsāheb), a young Karhāde Brāhmin (i.e., one of my own caste whose name I must not disclose), and a friend of many of my own relatives, taking me into his office said to me, "The Rānīsāheb will give you any amount of money you want and I will help you in any other way you like, but you must not leave our religion. You are like a father to me and I shall not let you go from this place unless you give me a definite promise." It was a very difficult situation in which he placed me but with the help of God I was able to get away. Other people from the Hindu Mahāsabhā and the Theosophical Society came to discuss the question with me

and to try and dissuade me from my purpose. Dharmavir Karandikar asked me such questions as the following "Did you not find truth in the writings of the Rishis? Did you not find lofty religious ideas in the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Upanishads*? Your going over to another religion means you are distrusting the Rishis and being disrespectful towards them. To this I replied, "I highly respect and revere the Rishis and I admit that they did find truth and I most heartily agree that the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Upanishads* do put forth lofty ideals but they give me intellectual satisfaction only and I have not received from them any real peace of mind. The living personality of Christ, His humility His love and His high standard of character have been the chief factors that carried me to Christ. Many other people came to see my sons as they had many friends, since they were both pursuing College studies one being in the final year for the B Sc degree and the other in the Inter Arts Class. People told them it was their duty to do their utmost to dissuade their father from taking such a step. Being very much troubled in their mind and greatly embarrassed, and since they had great faith in Gāndhijī they wrote the whole story to him and asked him his opinion as to their duty in such critical circumstances in the family. Gāndhijī promptly wrote to them a postcard as follows—"Dear friend, I congratulate you all on your not in any way interfering with your father in doing what he thought was right. If you are sure that Hinduism gives you the peace you need, it is your duty to retain it in spite of your father's change of faith." My sons then showed Gāndhijī's postcard to those people who were troubling them, and some of these were satisfied and did not think of troubling them any more. On the 5th of May 1934 at Mahabaleshwar I was baptized by Father Winelow and at the same time was confirmed by Bishop Acland. I continued living with my Brāhmin family in Poona and in the same house and the same Brāhmin locality and God is constantly overcoming every trouble in my way and



giving me full inward peace. I am therefore quite happy now and have never for a moment felt sorry for the step I took.'

### (6) *Spiritual Emancipation And Social Freedom*

Writing in the *C. S. S. Review* of June 1934 Father Winslow said it was 'very gratifying to a Christian to note the fine spirit' in which the acceptance of Christ 'by a well known Poona Brāhmin' had been greeted by his Hindu friends 'There is bound to be much distress amongst the super-orthodox But this at least can be said, that the spirit shown by the large circle of his immediate friends has been remarkable for its generosity and sympathetic understanding. Naturally there was sorrow at the thought that a certain gulf was coming between them and him, but, when once they became convinced that the step he was taking was due to no other motive than that of complete faith in Christ, and was only the outward expression before the world of beliefs which he had long held inwardly, so far from trying to put obstacles in his way, they showed that they respected his courage and honesty, and would even have thought less of him had his courage and honesty been found wanting. All this is a most significant sign of the times Twenty years ago, when the writer of this article first came to India, it would have been almost impossible. But since then there has come a steady weakening of the old caste exclusiveness, and the campaign of Gāndhījī against untouchability has advanced by leaps and bounds the prospect of its speedy disappearance. If the same pace of advance is maintained during the next few years, it will become the normal thing for a baptized Christian to remain living in his house and within his own community, just as in other countries From the Indian point of view, the great gain will be that Christians will increasingly cease to be regarded as a separate community, and to that extent an obstacle in the way of full national unity. But by continuing to live within their households and communities they will have constant and manifold opportunities of

sharing with others those spiritual treasures which they have found in Christ and of witnessing both by life and word to His living power. The events to which I have referred above give hope that the day when such a situation will be possible is nearer than some of us have dared to hope.

# PART FIVE: APPLICATION

## IS DNYĀNESHWAR'S RELIGION ADEQUATE FOR TO-DAY?

A.

WILL IT BUILD A WORTHY SOCIAL ORDER?

### CHAPTER XVIII

DNYĀNESHWAR AS PIONEER OF AN IMPERFECT  
'SPIRITUAL DEMOCRACY'

#### 1. 'Democracy' Of The 'Bhakti' School

If we are correctly to appraise the far-reaching influence of Dnyāneshwar that lies behind the ascription to him of the title, the Father of Mahārāshtra Nationality, we need to remember that all the Marāthī *bhakti* poets and national leaders bear witness to the fact that Dnyāneshwar has been their greatest inspiration. And if the depth and intensity of Dnyāneshwar's influence may be seen in the *bhakti* poets, its wide and popular range has been illustrated in many successive weeks when thousands of people have crowded the cinemas in various parts of India in order to see the film of Dnyāneshwar's life. In particular, if we are properly to understand the heroic age of the Marāthā people in the days of Shivājī their king and of their popular poets Rāmdās and Tukārām, we need to discover the forces that had been at work during the three or four centuries following the completion of their greatest masterpiece, the *Dnyāneshwarī*. Among the cardinal nation-building forces of those centuries we must give the leading place to what Professor H. G. Limaye, M A in the *Fergusson College Magazine* for February 1919 ( page 167 ) called 'the moral force of the movement' which, he added, 'was derived from the preaching of the great saints.' Among those great saints, Dnyāneshwar

has been unanimously given pre-eminence as all investigators, Indian and European alike, have reached the same conclusion. In the Wilson Philological Lectures, delivered to the Bombay University in 1917 and published in the *Fergusson College Magazine* for 1918-19 the late Principal W. B. Patwardhan stated. For five successive centuries Mahārāshtra was the abode of that noblest and truest of all democracies, the democracy of the *bhakti* School. The whole of the Marāṭhi literature of those centuries is a literature of spiritual democracy. The term spiritual democracy is stressed in all this, in contrast with the exclusiveness shown hitherto by the various schools of orthodox Hinduism which regarded all people not belonging to the three twice-born castes as literally outside the pale. In contrast with this view the *bhakti* literature 'breathes the breath of equality of fraternity and of spiritual liberty' to return to Principal Patwardhan's 1917 lectures 'The *bhakti* school democratized literature, so that all those who would, could and did bear their share in the building up of the grand edifice. There were Brāhmins, Shūdras, Shimpis (or tailors) Kumbhārs (or potters) Nhāvis (or barbers) even Mahārs (or out castes) that felt the call of the Divine Muse

## 2. Emancipation Of The Mahārāshtra National Mind

This Marāṭhā renaissance, as it may well be called covers a period from about A. D. 1290 (the date of Dnyāneshwar's great masterpiece) to the present day said the late Mr. L. J. Sedgwick, I. C. S., the Census Superintendent of the Bombay Government in 1921 in a notable contribution to the *Journal Of The Royal Asiatic Society Bombay* in 1910 (volume 23 No. 65) where he affirmed 'We are in the presence of a strange world of saints and poets a religion which had dominated the thoughts of the lower and middle classes in the Deccan. Other authorities on the four centuries covering the period from just before Dnyāneshwar's date to the 17th century have counted no less than fifty names of popular poets

and leaders in this great religious revival and social upheaval among the Marāthā people. The development and consummation of this nation-wide movement is set forth authoritatively by that classical historian of the Marāthās, the late Justice Mahādev G. Rānade, in his brilliant fragment entitled *Rise Of The Marāthā Power*. Rānade emphasizes that as a result of the work of the poet-saints through these centuries there came into existence the beginnings of a national feeling which he can only describe as a 'spiritual emancipation of the national mind'. It is therefore very clear that when Dnyāneshwar put the meaning of the *Bhagavadgītā*, India's greatest scripture, into the language of the Marāthā people, he released emancipating forces far greater than he dreamed.

### 3. 'Swarāj' Impossible in a Caste-Ridden Society

At the same time if the picture is to be a complete one, it is unfortunately necessary to remember that the Marāthā historian Justice Rānade shows that the later Marāthā Kingdom of the Peshwās contained within itself the seed of its own decay, because the nation's leaders failed to recognize this equality and sense of nationhood. As Dr. Rabīndranāth Tāgore has pointed out, Shivājī 'attempted the impossible' in seeking 'to save from Mogul attack a Hindu society of which ceremonial distinctions and isolation of castes are the very breath of life'. It is beyond the power of any man, it is opposed to the divine law of the universe, to establish the *swarāj* of such a caste-ridden, isolated, internally-torn sect over a vast continent like India' (I owe this reference to Jadunāth Sarkār's *Shivājī And His Times*, pp 483-4). This caste-ridden condition of things goes as far back as Dnyāneshwar's own day, as our biographical pages have already shown.

### 4. Mahārāshtra Brāhmīns

Since Dnyāneshwar was a Marāthī-speaking Brāhmīn it is worthy of note that a careful observer like William Crooke,

formerly of the Indian Civil Service, in his article on 'Bombay' in volume 2 of the *Encyclopædia Of Religion And Ethics* has pointed out that Mahārāshtra Brāhmīns are among 'the most capable Hindus in the Empire. In his able article on *Hinduism* in the 6th volume of the *Encyclopædia Of Religion And Ethics* on pp. 692-3 he quotes Dr S. V Ketkar that Mahārāshtra Brāhmīns 'regard themselves as the elite of mankind, not only because they are Brāhmīns, but also because they believe themselves superior to all other Brāhmīns. To them Gujarāth Brāhmīns (i. e. the Brahmins of Gujarāt) are only a caste of water carriers, and Telang Brāhmīns are a caste of cooks. They look upon the Brāhmīns of Northern India as degenerate because the latter are "fish-eaters. They again believe that all other Brāhmīns, like these of Northern India, are unable to pronounce Sanskrit speech correctly. On account of their pretensions to political and scholarly wisdom the Mahārāshtra Brāhmīns are far from popular. They often excommunicate persons either those who have returned from England or married a widow or drunk tea with Englishmen. (Dr Shridhar V Ketkar in *An Essay On Hinduism Its Formation And Future*, pp 87 83) Those acquainted with recent Indian history will recall the instance of the late Mr Bāl Gangādhār Tilak who only a few weeks before his death on August 1 1920 underwent the ceremony of *prāyashchitta* (purification) in consequence of visiting England. On Western India Brāhmīns Mr R. E. Enthoven's *Tribes And Castes Of Bombay* Vol. I, pp. 213-54 should be carefully studied.

## 5 Caste In Bombay Chawls

In June 1939 the able Premier of the Bombay Congress Government the Hon. Mr B G Kher stated in a Poona public meeting inaugurating the Western and Central India Harijan Conference I do not share the view that untouchability will not be eradicated until caste feeling disappears. Even those who do not agree to the abolition of all castes

admit that untouchability has no basis, religious, scientific or ethical .It is now a question of time, and I have no hesitation in saying that in the course of a few years, untouchability will have disappeared at least from our province . I feel sure that in the near future it will be demonstrated that untouchability is alien to and inconsistent with the genuine tenets of Hinduism, and that it has disappeared from our midst.' But note what was taking place in the Bombay Naigaum Chawls while the Premier spoke in Poona. On June 6, 1939 *The Times of India* reported a Bombay City Small Causes Court case which we abbreviate. We italicize the more astonishing words: 'A suit in ejectment before Mr. M D Lalkaka, Vacation Judge at the Small Causes Court, wherein the plaintiff sought to eject the defendant *on the ground that the defendant's stay on the premises situate at Naigaum Cross Road was objected to by other respectable Hindu tenants.* The facts briefly disclosed during the inquiry showed that *the defendant*, who had been a tenant for nearly two years, *passed his examination in law in November, 1938* Being a member of the Harijan community, the newspapers published his photograph and complimented him on his success in the examination. *Plaintiffs, having come to know that the defendant belonged to the Harijan community, immediately served him with a notice to quit the premises.* The defendant having failed to vacate, the plaintiffs filed this suit. It was sought to be argued on behalf of the defendant that....it was the declared policy of the present Government that *no Harijan should be subjected to disabilities because only of his birth.* ..The Judge, however, remarked that the law must take its course and that *the Court was concerned with the statute of the Legislature as it was.* There was no alternative for the defendant but to vacate the premises...The Court, however, taking into consideration all the circumstances, granted time to the defendant to vacate by July 15, 1939.'

## 6 Sir Sarvapalli Rādhākṛishnan At Oxford Bolsters Up Caste

And yet though an educated man in Bombay has to leave his house solely because he is called an 'untouchable, we have the spectacle of a leader like Dr Rādhākṛishnan, in the cultured halls of Oxford University seeking to vindicate the Indian caste system. Despite his wonderful versatility displayed to the full in his recent book *Eastern Religions And Western Thought* Sir Sarvapalli Rādhākṛishnan, who is the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford now and again shows how his old Hindu clothes still cling to him though they have now become such a misfit. Sometimes he defends idolatry as justifiable for religious infants, and now at Oxford he is defending caste. Our disapproval of his attitude on his vital matter in no way diminishes our warm appreciation of the act of the British Academy in making Sir Sarvapalli its first Indian Fellow. But we agree with an article in *The Young Men Of India, Burma And Ceylon* for July 1936 where that fine scholar Dr A. J Appasāmy reviewed Rādhākṛishnan's latest book and castigated Rādhākṛishnan as follows — The caste system, which forms an essential part of the Hindu religion, has destroyed all sense of unity and brotherhood even among its own followers. It has broken up the people of India into a large number of rigid and often factitious castes. Hinduism cannot be said in any way to have fostered a sense of unity. It is quite surprising that along with his plea for a new world-order Sir Sarvapalli Rādhākṛishnan continues the advocacy of caste. In his *Hindu View Of Life* he sought to interpret and defend the caste system on modern lines. In the last chapter of this book on 'The Individual And Social Order In Hinduism,' he attempts to do the same. He pleads that today a Brāhmin class is necessary.

If a Brāhmin class was found necessary even in those less organized and complicated times, it is much more necessary



today." And he goes on to suggest that this Brāhmin class should be determined by birth. It is astonishing that with all his breadth of outlook Rādhākṛishnan still supports the caste system, though he reinterprets it in modern ways. In India itself the caste system is disintegrating. All over the country there are movements of revolt against the rigidity of caste. .. What he says about the caste system would be resented not merely in India but all over the world, where leaders are striving after a new order of society in which all men have equal opportunities and in which birth or wealth will not give a man an unattainable advantage over others.'

## 7. Indian Christian Criticism Of Gāndhījī's Position On Caste

The *Indian Christian Patriot* of Madras pointed out a few months ago what it regarded as one of the weakest points in Gāndhījī's armoury in an editorial entitled 'Gāndhījī's Message and Method'. The article was marked by deep insight and laid bare one of the most serious weaknesses in present-day Indian politics. 'Gāndhījī's message is a message of spiritual peace but his method is political war,' said the editor of the *Patriot* and he continued. 'But caste is no hindrance to Gāndhījī's peace of mind. Removal of untouchability is one of his thirteen points but not the abolition of caste. He will have caste and all the violence perpetrated in the name of caste secretly and openly and yet will not raise his voice against caste and all the inequality and the injustice it implies. He sees the world at war and is ready with the remedy of non-violence but a beam lies across his eye and he hardly sees the violence which caste implies. He is anxious to preach peace to the world, while he is aware that there is no peace in India owing to the caste which serves as the right eye or the right hand of the land. While Christ cast off the Mosaic law and all Judaism as a worn out garb and marched towards the Cross and won the eternal garb of righteousness

and peace for himself and for all the world Gāndhījī still draws closer to him the worn out shreds of a caste-ridden Hinduism and fancies that the world could be led to the peace that passeth all understanding by accepting his creed of non-violence which harmonises with caste in his mind and in the mind of his followers. Our only comment on this is that all Hindu leaders would do well to remember that if they turn a blind eye on caste and all its evils they will be ignoring one of the biggest obstacles to India's true and enduring nationhood. Happily some Hindu leaders are fully awake to this fact. At the December 1935 session of the All India Hindu Mahasabdhā that great stalwart who is now a Judge of India's First Federal High Court, the Hon. Mr M. R. Jayakar brought forward a proposal advocating the abolition of caste. This far reaching proposal was unfortunately ruled out by the President a missed opportunity which argues as the *Reformer* well pointed out, that present day Hinduism feels it does not stand in need of reform. It is worthy of record that several progressive resolutions were passed on the same occasion giving untouchability a decent burial, abolishing 'distinctions based on birth, and adopting a five years scheme for uplifting depressed classes. All such resolutions are most commendable but so long as the caste problem is evaded, so long will the Jayakars and the Natarājans and the Ambedkars need to send forth their thunder. And over all the thunder against caste in India, as over all the din of Europe's war weapons, there comes the Still Small Voice, Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you.

## 8 Untouchables And Unapproachables India's Soul-Agony

It will enable us to realize how deadly is the poison at work in India's body politic from 'untouchability' if we take a brief glance beyond Dnyāneshwar's Marāthā people and look at the problem for a moment for the standpoint of India as a

whole. In the present-day maelstrom of Indian communal politics there are so many factors at work that it behoves us to try and understand them. Sometimes such writers as have nothing to do with Indian politics may help us in this difficult task. One such disinterested worker for Indian people wrote an able article in the December 1940 issue of *The Indian Journal Of Social Work* on the Harijans of Kalady in the Travancore State, where they go by the name of 'Pulayas'. The writer was Mr. R. Velayudhan, a Research Worker with the All India Harijan Sevak Sangh, who stated the following — 'The one distinctive characteristic of Hindu society is the caste system. India is the only country in the world in which long accepted social and religious sanctions support a system in which a large section of the population are by accident of birth declared to be untouchable and in certain instances unapproachable.' The author then quotes Gāndhījī who, in the publication entitled *My Soul's Agony*, has said: 'Socially the untouchables are lepers; economically they are worse than slaves. Religiously, they, the children of God, are denied entrance to places which all call houses of God. They are denied the use of public roads, public schools, public hospitals, public wells, public taps and public parks and the like. They are relegated for their residence to the worst quarters of cities and villages where they practically get no social services. In some cases their approach within a measured distance is a social crime. The wonder is that they are at all able to eke out an existence or that they still remain in the Hindu fold. They are too downtrodden to rise in revolt against the oppressors.' On this moving expression by Gāndhījī of India's 'Soul Agony,' Mr. Velayudhan observes: 'The "touch-me-not spirit," started by the higher castes, has permeated the "untouchables" themselves and resulted in the division and subdivision of these unfortunate members of the Hindu fold.' In his illuminating paper Mr. Velayudhan later makes the following statement which is worthy of careful note by all

Hindu leaders 'The wrong done to the Pulaya [or untouchable] for centuries must be atoned for by present society and the State. True it is that Travancore is the first State in India to throw open the gates of the temples to the Harijan. I recognize all the psychological and social implications of this act of courage. But we must not forget that this is only the beginning of solving the vast problem of untouchability. Admission of the Harijan into the presence of the gods is no substitute for granting him all that the gods intended for him. The orthodox Hindu has stood between him and all nature's bounties for him for ages. But now the tide is turning. Society whether it likes it or not, must undo the wrong that has been done to the Harijan and has been perpetuated in the name of religion. This is well said, especially when it is remembered that many of the Harijans in various parts of India have been urging—alas! too often in vain—that benefits of a more practical character than the mere privilege of temple entry may be conferred on them.

## 9 The Canker At The Heart Of India

During the last year of Lālā Lajpat Rāi the lion of the Punjab delivered an important address on Social Reform *versus* Political Reconstruction which is worth recalling today. He told his audience that there was no use attempting any readjustment of political affairs in India without first putting their own house in order. Social reform had been on the tapis, he said, for several years, and the results achieved had not been great. His experience of the social conditions in Malabar had made him all the sadder. The problem of untouchability he said, was a general evil throughout India, but the main point Lālā Lajpat Rāi stressed was that unapproachability was unique as a dangerous canker eating into the vitals of Hindu society. So long as that menace was tolerated there was no hope of salvation material, moral, or religious, nor was it conceivable to think of Swarāj when a substantial portion of the

Hindu community was allowed to suffer the miseries and hardships wrought by the higher classes on the lower. Such meaningless term as 'higher' and 'lower' classes must go, said this able man who died in less than a year after his searching message to his countrymen. And all who would really help India to attain its real place in the world must devote themselves to the elimination of this canker of untouchability and caste, from the heart of India. In that mighty task, a task worthy of moral giants, but in which the humblest of us by brotherly love can make our contribution, the message of Jesus of Nazareth will have a place all its own.

### 10. Hindu & Christian Methods With Harijans

In the same article on Social Conditions among Travancore Harijans, Mr. R. Velayudhan writes. 'It must be admitted to the credit of the early Christian Missionary Societies that it was they who first started educating the Harijans in Travancore. The result of this policy is seen in a table which gives 'the relative literacy figures among the Christian converts and the Hindu Harijans in Travancore' as follows. Percentage of literacy among the Hindus of the Pulayan, Parayan and Kuravan castes are 4 and 4.9 and 1.5 respectively, whereas the literacy percentages among the Christians in these same three castes are 13, and 15.1 and 9.7 respectively. The article adds. 'There are graduates and undergraduates among the Christian Harijans, whereas there is none among the Hindu Harijans. The better condition of the converted Harijans is due to the fact that the missionaries had personal contact with the people and looked to their needs. The Hindu society and the State rested content in opening schools for the Harijans, unmindful of the fact that mere legal permission to go to school is no guarantee of social uplift.'

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## CHAPTER XIX

### A BLOT ON THE DEMOCRACY OF BHAKTI

#### 1 Revolution Needed In Hindu Temples

So much emphasis has in recent years been placed and rightly placed, on the emancipating values of the *bhakti* school in Hinduism as contrasted with the exclusiveness of orthodox Hinduism that a true perspective calls for the facts on the other side. A far reaching revolution though a quiet one externally is going on inside some of the largest Hindu temples in India. The world famed Meenākshi Temple in Madurā, the ancient temple in Tanjore, and over a hundred other important temples in South India have been thrown open to that section of Hindu society called untouchable which for centuries has been refused any entrance. *The Guardian*, near to these events, has said, One effect noticed in the neighbouring villages of Madurā was that caste Hindus allowed Harijans into prohibited places, and the tendency was to mix on the ground that restrictions removed in Shri Meenakshi Temple were meaningless elsewhere. The change of outlook implied in this meek acceptance of change cannot be underestimated and means the breakdown of a principle that was called to aid in the preparation of injustice in the villagers. That the custom of untouchability cannot survive long elsewhere after its denial in the centre of holy sanctions is a fair forecast. The value of all this is that Hindus may at least be learning the all important truth that all men are equal in the sight of God. This truth is so essential to India's future in every respect that we must be grateful for every moment that teaches it. But let not India's so called untouchables expect any direct benefit from the direct access to temple idols, for

India's own leaders have shown the very opposite to be the case. Even concerning temple-entry itself we cannot forget the important fact that 'immediately after the Poona Pact in 1932 many of the temples not only in the Madras Province but in other Provinces were opened to members of the Depressed Classes as a token of change of heart, but a few weeks after all the doors were again barred to these unfortunates' So said Rao Bahadur M. C. Rājāh, M. L. A., interviewed by a representative of *The Madras Mail* in 1939.

## 2. Dr. Āmbedkar On 'Annihilation Of Caste'

During the year 1936 there was published an eight-anna publication by Dr. B. R. Āmbedkar entitled *Annihilation Of Caste*, published at the Bhārat Bhūshan Press, 57 Vincent Road, Dādar, Bombay 14, the printing press of the weekly *Janatā* (established by Dr. Āmbedkar). It is not too much to say that in his book of some 110 pages Dr. Āmbedkar has helped to make new Indian history, and the circumstances leading to its publication are worthy of note. The then Principal of the Bombay Government Law College had prepared it as a Presidential Address to the Jāt Pāt Todak Mandal Conference at Lahore in May 1936, but the Conference was cancelled owing to the revolutionary character of the address forwarded by Dr. Āmbedkar beforehand, one sentence intimating that this would be his 'last speech as a Hindu.' In an Appendix, Gāndhījī's 'Vindication Of Caste' is printed in two articles from the *Harijan* of July 1936 with Dr. Āmbedkar's trenchant reply. After the learned lawyer's onslaught on Gāndhījī it was characteristically just and generous of the latter to describe Dr. Āmbedkar as 'a man who has carved out for himself a unique position in society' Since enlightened Indian opinion about his clap of thunder was reflected in the reformed Hindu weekly, *The Subodh Patrikā*, we quote a few of its lines below 'The general conclusions that Dr. Āmbedkar draws after examining the whole case, we

must say, have our hearty approval. And we also agree that it is sheer hypocrisy that prevents the few that accept them from enlightening the masses on the situation as it is, to the detriment of the entire community. These conclusions may be stated as follows —That the organisation of the Hindu society on *Chāturvarṇa* [the four chief castes Brāhmin Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra] is harmful because the effect of this ordering is to degrade the masses by denying them the opportunity to acquire knowledge to emasculate them by denying them the right to use arms that the Hindu society must be reorganised on a religious basis which would recognise the principles of Liberty Fatherly and Equality that in order to achieve this object the sense of religious sanctity behind caste and *Varṇa* can be destroyed only by discarding the divine authority of the *Shāstras*. From our reading of Gāndhījī's reply to these we cannot help concluding that Gāndhījī's vindication of caste and the *varṇa* system and his insistence that every one should keep to his ancestral calling (*varṇa vyavasthā*) are, to say the least of them either sheer quibbling or self-delusion. Nothing can elucidate the position better than Dr Ambedkar's convincing answer to Mr Gāndhī's reply. To defend caste and *varṇa-vyavasthā* in these days is to defend the indefensible. To identify caste with *varṇa* is to misstate a fact. No one adheres to *varṇa* in these days if *varṇa* is to be interpreted, as Mr Gāndhī interprets it, as ancestral calling. Dr Ambedkar has pointed out conclusively how Gāndhījī himself has observed it only by breaking the law in his own case.

### 3 Inadequate Caste Reform By Bhakti

When Gāndhījī, in July 1936 in the *Harjan*, replying to Dr Ambedkar's able Tract For The Times on *Annihilation Of Caste* stated that *bhakti* saints showed Hinduism at its best, Dr Ambedkar answered that these Hindu saints had proved ineffective in Indian history and his line of reasoning



was very powerful. On pages 13-15 of the Appendix to this Tract on Caste Dr. Āmbedkar states: 'With regard to the (Hindu) saints, one must admit that. they have been lamentably ineffective. They have been ineffective for two reasons. *Firstly*, none of the (Hindu) saints ever attacked the caste system. On the contrary they were staunch believers in the system of castes ... The (Hindu) saints have never according to my study carried on a campaign against caste and untouchability. They were not concerned with the struggle between man and man. They were not concerned with the relation between man and God. They did not preach that all men were equal. They preached that all men were equal in the eyes of God, a very different and a very innocuous proposition which nobody can find difficult to preach or dangerous to believe in. The *second* reason why the teaching of the (Hindu) saints proved ineffective was because the masses have been taught that a saint might break caste but the common man must not ... That the masses have remained staunch believers in caste and untouchability shows that the pious lives and noble sermons of the (Hindu) saints have had no effect on their life and conduct as against the teachings of the *shāstras*.....Whatever the plan Gāndhījī puts forth as an effective means to free the masses from the teachings of the *shāstras* (in favour of caste), .....in India, with the attitude the common man has, to saints and Mahātmās, to honour and not to follow, one cannot make much out of it.'

#### 4 Out-Castes At Pandharpūr

One of the ablest books published in recent years on Western India was the Rev. Alexander Robertson's *Mahār Folk* (see *Dnyānodaya* Aug. 3, 1939). Most missionaries and Indian Christian leaders will feel that in the last few pages of this invaluable book Mr. Robertson has made the parallel between *bhakti* religion at Pandharpūr and Christian teaching to appear much closer than it is in actual life and experience.

The balance is partly, but only partly redressed by the last page of the book where it is shown how the Christian message goes far beyond what is known as the religion of Pandharpur. Into the latter Christian meanings are too often read, both on page 2 and in other places. Too much is also read into passages in the Marathi poets against caste distinction. One example must suffice. In the ancient *abhangs* (or verses) it is said that caste distinction was not observed at Pandharpur. A footnote refers to Mahipati's *Bhaktavijaya*, chapter 40 66. This verse, however, would read in English that all who lived at Pandharpur *should be* considered alike. Such a sentence does not record an actual achievement but only an ideal or aspiration. How far the actual achievement has been below this ideal is seen from the fact that to this day no Mahār has ever knowingly been admitted into Vithobā's temple there. Low-caste people are admitted but out-castes never. In *Stories Of Indian Saints* vol. 1 chapter 23 which is the 9th volume in the present 'Poet Saints of Mahārāshtra Series, may be read the story of how Chokhāmelā the Mahār was kept out of the temple and, indeed, ordered out of the city (See also our *Life And Teaching Of Tukārām* pp 54-55 162-3 261-2) When therefore, we read in Mr Robertson's book of the Mahār folk memory that *bhakti's* true saints are not respectors of persons, we recall the comments given above from Dr Ambedkar who knows exactly how the shoe pinches even today for when the Bombay Congress Government passed its 19 Bill to make possible the Temple Entry of untouchables, the Pandharpur temple authorities passed a resolution of most vigorous protest against what they regarded as an outrageous proposal. The publication of that resolution in the columns of the Marathi newspaper the *Kesari* reflected high credit on that great and popular journal.

## 5 Caste-Worshippers And Outcaste-Worshippers At Pandharpūr

Ever since an angry and disappointed Gōsāvī mendicant broke the legs of the Vithobā image at Pandharpūr nearly seventy years ago on July 20, 1873 as related in our English book entitled *The Life And Teaching Of Tukārām* (pp. 60-61), non-Hindu visitors to Pandharpūr have have been limited to a view from the Vithobā temple roof. In October 1920, it was our privilege to witness from that roof the unforgettable sight of the Pandharpūr *kīrtankārs* (singers) flinging themselves prostrate before the image after three continuous hours of rapturous dancing and singing. The impressions which we received and recorded in our book on Tukārām are corroborated in an interesting account written by an American visitor, Frank J. Kline, who wrote the following account in the *Western India Notes* for August 1940. From the temple roof Mr. Kline saw what he relates in the following 'Of course the main attraction to pilgrims is Vithoba. This idol is in a small room, accessible from two sides, one entrance for women and the other for men. There are large waiting rooms for both. The women's waiting room is an enclosed place to one side, not of the temple building. It actually looks like a cattle shed, with wire sides, corrugated "tin" top and heavy wooden gates. We asked some women near the entrance to the temple how long they had been sitting in line waiting. They said, "Two days!" The men's waiting room is larger, under the temple roof, and they wait only hours, not days, to get in "to see God." There are many more men than women who "go to church" in India. We were allowed on a balcony where we could see all the people as they went to see the idol. They first lay face down, made a sign, rolled over, then got up. I saw them doing this in a room, or entrance, just in front of the idol. We "unbelievers" were not allowed to see the idol. However, through another air-hole we could see the base of

the idol and a chained off space through which one person at a time may go. But they don't just "go through, they are *rushed* through. There is a man at the exit side and I watched him take the worshippers by the arm and pull them hurriedly along saying "Hurry hurry! Many people coming Hurry on and go out." As we watched them we counted from 18 to 22 people being rushed past the idol each *minute*! We are seeing how these people worship. Certainly we are justified in saying that they worship in a hurry! Many of them have *slaved* to save the cash for this pilgrimage many have walked miles, many others carry yellow flags which signify a holy vow to visit Pandharpur each year of their lives. They come *seeking* They seem simple and sincere. I have never seen a more quiet, orderly or more easily handled crowd in any country at any gathering religious or secular. We watched them worship. We saw them rushed! Each man has an average of about three seconds "to see God." You may say "grossly inadequate." Yes *but even so there is a vast distinction between that and the lot of the out-caste!* For it is only caste people who are allowed to come into this temple of Vithobā. Outside in the street, backed up against a corner building at the cross roads is the place of the out-castes idol Chokhobā, a former devotee, become a god. At first all we can see in the press of the crowd is a canopy, like our beach umbrellas. We want to take moving pictures, as the police and priests clear a space in the crowd. Now we can see inside. There is a hole in the street, about five feet by three, and one foot deep. In it is the idol and over it the canopy. They step into the pit drop there money gifts, embrace the idol some fervently some mechanically by placing their cheeks on either side of the idol cover their foreheads with their palms, make the sign of reverence, and then they are pushed and pulled out while others rush in "to see God." They go through at the rate of 20 to 23 per minute, just a trifle more speedily than the upper caste in the temple.

And this is what we see as we watch India "go to church" in Pandharpūr.

## 6. Brāhmin Appeal To Pandharpūr Priests

### (1) *Harijans Should Be Allowed Vithobā Darshan*

In 1939 the Pandharpūr temple priests united in sending to the Bombay Congress Government a vigorous protest against the Temple Entry Bill which that Government had prepared empowering Hindu temple authorities in the Bombay Presidency to open to untouchables all those Hindu temples whose trustees might desire to do so. This protest by the Pandharpūr priests has borne encouraging fruit, though in a very different direction from that which they themselves intended, for a public Appeal has been made to them by Mahārāshtrian Brāhmins. At the time of the *Āshādhī Ekādashī* Festival in July 1940 there appeared in the Marāthī daily papers of Mahārāshtra a lengthy Marāthī appeal by forty Brāhmins of Mahārāshtra, whose signatures were headed by that enlightened orthodox Hindu reformer Mr N C Kelkar. His vigorous Marāthī may be freely translated as below—The main heading reads *Harijan Sevak Sangh Request For All Hindus To Be Allowed To See The Image of Vithobā*. By way of introducing so delicate and far-reaching a subject, several of Tukārām's verses were quoted, followed by a beautiful couplet from the widely revered *Padma Purān* which declares, 'People who are gathered for the festival of Vishnu should be regarded as God's own, even if they are low-caste people' The Appeal then stated 'The temple of Vithobā at Pandharpūr is the grandest and most famous in the whole of Mahārāshtra and Pandharpūr itself is rightly regarded as the holy Benāres of South India since thousands of pilgrims, not merely from Mahārāshtra but from all parts of India, go to Pandharpūr every year. Hindus gather at the Pandharpūr Festival in their hundreds of thousands on the two most prominent holy days of the Hindu Year, viz, the 11th of *Āshādh* and the 11th

of *Kārtik*. Hundreds of *bhajan* (singing) parties, with banners as their sacred sign, journey hundreds of miles to Pandharpur on foot, shouting and singing the name of Vithobā all the way for the *Āshādhī* and the *Kārtikī* Festivals are the religious gatherings of the *Wārkarī* (pilgrim) sect. But, sad to-day Harijans have not as yet obtained permission to enter Vithobā's temple [or to enjoy the Vithoba-*darshan*, that is, to get a sight of the idol called Vithobā or Vitthal] Nevertheless all classes of Harijans go to Pandharpur every year inspired by great devotion and although they are not allowed inside the temple they are happy if only they can get a sight of the temple and its golden pinnacle. Being disallowed in the temple they have to content themselves by bowing down before the shrine of their "untouchable" but venerated Mahar Saint Chokhamela at the other side of the narrow street. Even though it be *outside* the temple door if they can offer their worship they consider their pilgrimages as having been successful.

## (2) *The Hindu Temple Entry Movement*

The Brahmin Appeal of July 9 1940 continued. For hundreds of years Shri Vitthal has been given pre-eminence in the *bhakti* school of devotion especially by the *Wārkarī* (pilgrim) sect. During a period of four or five hundred years dating from the time of Dnyāneshwar up to the beginning of British rule in India, the great Maharāshtra saints such as Tukāram Nāmdev and Eknath have sung the praises of Shri Vitthal and have expressed their conviction that the Vitthal whose image is at Pandharpur pervades the whole universe and looks upon all his devotees with equal love. Even Saint Chokhāmela who was born in the Mahār caste, was equally dear to Vithoba, and in his *Sant Vijaya* Mahipati tells the story that the Lord of Pandharpur brought the Mahār Saint Chokhāmela into the innermost shrine of Pandharpur. In Mahipati's story of Damajipant also we learn that Shri Vitthal

assumed the form of the Mahār called Vithū and thereby discharged the duties of Dāmājipant.' [Readers who possess the 'Poet Saints of Mahārāshtra Series' of books should turn to volume 10, chapter 40, entitled 'Dāmājipant of Mangalvedhe,' pp 85-99]. This makes clear the belief of our Hindu poet-saints that God never makes any distinction between those of high and low birth. On this subject a movement has been going on for many years which has for its aim the rooting out from Hinduism of such evil customs as untouchability, so as to restore to Hinduism its ancient splendour. The time has therefore come to press forward to a successful issue the movement started by our Hindu saints, the movement of exterminating the sin of holding delusive ideas of caste distinctions. This is taking place in different parts of India. The Shri Padmanābhā temple in Trāvancore, the Shri Meenākshī temple at Madurā, the Gopāl temple of Indore, and other important temples, have been made accessible to the despised Harijans. In Bombay City alone seventy-one temples have in this way been opened to them. In Mahārāshtra itself over thirty temples have opened their doors to the Harijans. These include the wellknown Kolhāpūr temple of Shri Āmbābāī (the mother goddess) which by the kindness of the Mahārājā of Kolhāpūr, Shri Shāhū Chhatrapati, has been known to welcome the Harijans for many years past. Since educated people in Mahārāshtra are favourable to the temple entry of Harijans, and since untouchability must be removed from every walk of life, it is particularly important from the religious point of view that all caste-spirit should be rooted out from the religious life of Hinduism. In one place Tukārām says "Where there is a true longing for God, there we find no distinction at all."

### (3) *World Revolutions While Hindus Remain Slaves To Custom*

'In the *Purāṇic* books and the *Smṛiti* scriptures,' said the Mahārāshtra Brāhmins on July 9, 'it is affirmed that there

should be no idea of defilement concerning anyone who has come from the worship of Shri Vishnu. Moreover, since there has been such a sweeping revolution in the views held by the bulk of Indian society and since such lofty ideals of life are now the chief ambition of the Indian people, it is of the utmost importance that the Pandharpur temple of Shri Vitthal should be immediately made accessible to Harijans as well as to caste Hindus. While far reaching revolutions are taking place in other parts of the world every day we Hindus still remain slaves of our old customs and make a fuss of the merest trifles. If the temple of Shri Vitthal can in this way be opened to the millions of Harijans we believe a surge of new life will sweep through Hindu society supplying new proof of the fact that religion is the one factor holding the whole of Hindu society together. The national unity we all desire will only come when we forget all caste distinctions in the presence of Shri Vitthal. Another great result will be that multitudes of pilgrims will carry this message with them and will proclaim it in all the nooks and corners of Mahārāshtra. Since the Pandharpur temple of Shri Vitthal is Mahārāshtra's most holy place a united demand by the multitudes of pilgrims who go there from all parts of Mahārāshtra for the *Āshādhī* and *Kārtikī* Fairs, that the Vithobā temple shall be made accessible to Harijans, should serve to convince the priests at Pandharpur that they have no alternative but to respond to this call of Mahārāshtra. To support this movement, all the Hindu people in every part of Mahārāshtra, as well as the pilgrims who gather at Pandharpur should unitedly take up this question and should request the Pandharpur priests to demonstrate to the world that in God's temple all people are equal and among all people we include the devotees of Saint Chokhāmela who should be given full access to the temple and the disciples of that same Saint Chokhāmela whose shrine has been kept outside the temple enclosure for centuries.



#### (4) *Protection And Organization Of Hindu Society*

Then followed the signatories of forty of the leading Brāhmins in all parts of Mahārāshtra. After the names of the forty signatories, the veteran Hindu leader Mr. N. C. Kelkar added the following significant lines :—' Since it is eminently desirable from every point of view that all parts of Hindu society ( i. e, high caste, low caste, and out-caste ) should be united together, we make an earnest request to the authorities of the Pandharpūr temple that they should grant to the people known as Harijans ( untouchables ) the benefit enjoyed by all other Hindus of getting a sight of the images of Shrī Vitthal and Rakhumāi standing in the front hall of the temple. Such a development will in no way affect the glory, the fame, the merit of the holy place at Pandharpūr, but on the contrary it will ensure the protection and organization of Hindu society. (Sd) N. C. Kelkar, Poona, July 9, 1940.'

#### (5) *Ensuring 'Cow Protection'*

Seven or eight more lines added by a leader of the Cow Protection Society at Wāi were to the effect that 'by the granting of the foregoing request there will be no questions of untouchability involved. But on the other hand, by the uniting of Hindu society in the definite welcome accorded to *all* classes of Hindus in the temple of Vitthal ( the *avatār* of Krishna ), there will be a definite welding together of the whole of Hinduism, and such problems as that of cow protection will be automatically solved.'

#### (6) *Mahārāshtra Brāhmin Culture And Character*

The Appeal in Marāthī to the Pandharpūr temple priests which we have translated above, urging that the main temple there be made accessible to Harijans ( untouchables ), reflected great credit on the Brāhmin leaders of Mahārāshtra. But anyone who is acquainted with the educated Mahārāshtrian Brāhmin will in no way be surprised at the deep and genuine

concern therein expressed for the longsuffering Harijans or so-called 'untouchables'. For the enlightened Brāhmin of present-day Western India is as far as possible from being anti Harijan in attitude and he suffers from having attributed to him the shortcomings of his Brāhmin ancestors of earlier generations. This anyway is the firm opinion of the present writer who has found the great majority of the Mahārāshtrian Brāhmins he has known to be men of culture, refinement and character. We are persuaded that this conclusion is in no way due to any undue limitation in opportunities of contact for our literary social and educational responsibilities during more than thirty two years in India have thrown us into the company of Marathi speaking Brahmins of almost every school. We are therefore glad to have this opportunity of stating our belief that the Mahārashtrian Brāhmin is a much misunderstood and abused individual.

## 7 The Hypocrisy And Degradation Of Caste

Anyone who desires proof of the high souled worth of the modern Brahmin at least in the Marathi speaking part of India, should read the Marathi *Life of Sir Nārāyan Chandāvarkar* the memory of whose friendship we shall treasure to the end of our days. There are many forceful utterances from Sir Nārāyan on this subject in his Marathi biography of over 500 pages and more than a quarter of a million words. 'When I found years ago said Sir Nārāyan on one occasion that caste was a mere mockery a huge hypocrisy men professing to be what in reality they were not, I thought to myself that no community can live long on shams. Caste has proved the curse of the country. As long as it lasts we are doomed. Each caste seems to look to itself as if it was and ought to be all in all. He who tries to lower and degrade others, and treat them as castaways, ends in the long run by lowering and degrading himself (D G Vaidya's *Life of Sir N G Chandāvarkar* pp. 233 223 449 340) So said the

Marāthī-speaking Sāraswat Brāhmin who in turn was Editor, High Court Judge, Indian State Premier and First President of the Bombay Legislative Council.

## 8. Caste And The 'Dead Hand Of The Past'

Why this unwillingness on the part of the Pandharpūr priests, as of thousands of others in temples throughout India, to grant free access to those who are deemed 'untouchable' in origin? One explanation is to be found in a few principles set forth in the great Marāthī biography we have just referred to. 'When you think of social reform you have to face a Himālaya of superstition, corruption and bigotry, the removal of which can only be by labour which cannot be painless .... The opposition of Hindu orthodoxy does not last long, what at first had been denounced as irreligious and immoral' is 'subsequently accepted as a matter of course. . . "We *shāstrīs* know the time is against us and it is no use opposing. You people should not consult us, but go your own way and do the thing you think right, we shall not come in your way. But if you ask us and want us to twist the *shāstras* to your purpose and go with you, we must speak truth plainly and we must oppose" ' (Sir N. G Chandāvarkar's *Life* pp 218, 62, 216). These are priceless hints from one of the greatest of Hindu reformers. But the deep-dyed conservatism of Hindu caste is far from being an adequate explanation of the unprogressive and reactionary character of the orthodox Hinduism of our time. A deeper diagnosis shows that wherever *any* system is bound by its ancient books and time-worn codes, the sad result is seen in things being controlled by 'the dead hand of the past.' But where ancient scriptures have embedded in their teaching the promise of the Divine Spirit of Truth, who is the Inspirer of unending progress, as is the case with the literature of the Bible, equally ancient with the Hindu sacred books, then there is ensured a law of progress which saves its readers and devotees from being enchained to the past. The Brāhmin.

petitioners of July 9 1940 may well lay to heart a few of Sir Nārāyan's words of many years ago. It was not by getting indignant at priests that one would reform the country. A new life meant a new spirit. The only way to regenerate India was to regenerate its heart (p. 260). This again drives us back upon the necessity of the Spirit of God Himself dwelling in *all* our temples of religion Hindu and Christian alike, to save them from becoming shrines of a decaying system instead of centres of new life. We say *Hindu and Christian* for there is many a so-called Christian Church which is nothing more than a brick or stone edifice with no life or light within for the needy souls there.

## 9 ~ Why Religion Is Often Moribund

This leads us to the reflection that for the preservation of *any* religion from deterioration and decay no book is of itself adequate there must be at the very heart of the religion the recognition of a Personal Dynamic Presence as the guiding transforming secret of the whole. This is the secret of the progressive dynamic power of whatever religious life has the actual historic figure of the Living Christ at its centre and makes Him the transfiguring motive-power. It is because at the heart of Hinduism there is the unhistorical, mythical figure of Krishna, himself no ideal of purity that the temples of religion in India are what they ought not to be and equally it must be said that it is when the living dynamic Christ is professed but not possessed, praised but not obeyed, proclaimed but not exemplified, that we have the world cursed with a *form* of godliness without its power. A decayed Hinduism and a moribund church are both of them denials of true religion and are both equally useless.

## 10 Comradeship The Soldier's Only Caste

The 1940 Brāhmin petition suggests other comments reserved for our next chapter. Meanwhile let us enjoy a good

waft of fresh air from the practical humanitarianism reflected in a world-famous story. How far the spirit of caste can drift from the law of brotherly love and how witheringly the spirit of caste can be reprov'd in India were both seen in the well-known story told of that fine Rajput prince, Sir Pratāp Singh, whose one prayer had been that as a Rajput warrior he might be granted the favour of falling in the great war of 1914 during a cavalry charge at the head of his world-famous Jodhpūr Lancers. On one occasion a young English officer had died in the palace of this Rajput prince. Though this was terrible pollution for any Rajput, yet Sir Pratāp would not allow the body to be removed by the low-caste servants, but he himself carried it to the bier. Next day the Brāhmīns of the place waited on him with their hands raised in horror and their tongues clamouring about caste. 'Caste!' replied Sir Pratāp superbly 'Among soldiers there is no caste but that of comrade.'

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## CHAPTER XX

### INDIA'S NEED OF THE REVOLUTIONARY CHRIST

#### 1 Why Jesus Raided A Temple

To the Pandharpur priests and the Maharashtra Brāhmīns who have petitioned them we commend a New Testament story. Long before the Vithoba temple at Pandharpūr and its exclusive worship came into existence, there was a certain Jewish temple whose priests also were hindrances instead of helps. Those who read the story as given in the first three books of the New Testament ( St. Matthew 21 12-14 St. Mark 11 15-18 and St. Luke 19 45-47 ) will see that when three years appeals to the Jerusalem priests had failed, Jesus no longer contented Himself with mere appeal but asserted His moral and religious authority by *acting*, and He showed His holy anger regarding the sin of those who abused the temple. He literally cleared them out. In that remarkable incident Jesus made what was no more or less than a 'raid on the temple in Jerusalem. This temple story has elements of parallel with the Pandharpur temple. The spirit of nationalism with all its exclusiveness, had invaded the very temple of God in such a way as to rob of its privileges those who were not Jews, and so was hindering the purpose of Jesus in conveying the love of His Father to *all* the children of men. Against this spirit of national exclusiveness Jesus made His great onslaught. It was not merely the buying and selling in the Temple that offended Him it was rather the monopolizing of the court of the Gentiles by this merchandizing. That part of the temple, the largest of all, had been planned purposely to offer to *all* the nations access to the God of Israel. But the authorities had developed the system of markets until markets filled

the Court.' They had made it impossible for the nations of the world to worship Israel's God. They had robbed the world of true religion. It is surely not going too far to say that not until the same 'revolutionary Christ' has Himself entered India's temples, Hindu, Muslim and Christian alike, and not until He has cleansed them, will they become worthy of being called the 'Father's House' where *all* God's needy children can pray and get help.

## 2. Intensifying Untouchability & Disunion By Temple-Entry

In 1932 *The Servant of India* observed: 'It does no credit to the sense of humanity of the opponents of Temple-Entry that while they would prevent the depressed classes from getting into temples, they would have no compunction in tolerating the entry of dogs, buffaloes, cows, etc., into them. This is nothing short of assigning to the depressed classes a status even lower than these animals. Do orthodox Hindus want to deny to their fellow-beings what they would not mind dogs and cattle enjoying?' Having made our position clear on the democratic principle, we affirm our conviction that Temple Entry will diminish neither the untouchability nor the Hindu disunity on which the July 9, 1940 Brāhmin petition laid emphasis. We therefore ask with all the emphasis of which we are capable. What benefit will the Hindu temples bring to Harijans (untouchables) when they *have* entered them? Gāndhījī himself said years ago in his Yeravdā correspondence that these temples are 'places we miscall houses of God.' What the untouchables will see when they *are* allowed inside the temples will be a lifeless idol, one of those hundreds of millions of idols that Indian social reformers today maintain have been the moral and social curse of India for hundreds of years past. Moreover, these very temples will only deepen the very untouchability which Gāndhījī and the Brāhmins of the July 9, 1940 petition desire to smash down.

### 3 Caste And Idolatry Disrupting Hindu Society

Among the Hindus worth listening to on the subject of Indian idolatry are the Brāhmo Samājists who in the spirit of the great Rājā Rām Mohun Roy have been fighting it for over a century past. What say they? In their weekly Calcutta organ *The Indian Messenger* for November 6 1932, they said A false notion of sanctity attached to idolatrous ceremonial worship necessitates the mediacy of a Brāhmin priest. Not to speak of non Brāhmin worshippers Brāhmins belonging to the same section of the mediating priest must not touch him while at worship. This "touch-me-notism" ingrained in the ceremonial worship of idols is the breeding ground of untouchability. Raja Rām Mohun Roy was quite justified in characterizing Hindu idolatry as generating separatist tendencies subversive of the texture of society. Caste and idolatry have brought the Hindu society to the verge of disruption. In view of these statements by the highest Indian authorities, who will dare to affirm that in obtaining temple-entry for India's untouchables, Gāndhujī is ensuring either *their* moral benefit or the national unity which is vital for India's future? He will most certainly be strengthening the hold of idolatry on India's illiterate millions.

### 4 Caste-Spirit Makes Any Church Non Christian

In writing the foregoing paragraphs it is in no way the present writer's intention to score any points as between one religion and another. Sadhu Sundar Singh said many years ago that caste in the Christian Church is like elephantiasis to the Church's feet, and the late Nehemiah Goreh once declared that Christianity with any caste-spirit in it was no Christianity at all. On this subject the needed word has been spoken by the Indian Chairman of the National Christian Council, Dr Azariah, the Indian Bishop of Dornakal, who, writing in his own *Dornakal Diocesan Magazine* in 1935 said We deplore the many exhibitions of caste spirit within the Church.



It saddens us to think that not all followers of Christ have learned to show in practice that all are brethren in Christ.' These three Indian Christian condemnations of caste-spirit in any so-called 'Christian' Church supply adequate comment on an address given at Kodaikanal on May 15, 1940, on 'Social Conditions of the Rural Christian Community' by an Indian Christian minister named the Rev. D. S. Sahayadas of Neyyatinkārā in Trāvancore who said "Caste is a thing that has grown to be part and parcel of the Indian social life and as such an ordinary Christian feels himself justified in observing caste in spite of the teaching of his Master who was a Friend of sinners and out-castes...It is so deeply rooted that even among the castes that are supposed to be the lowest in the scale, divisions between sub-castes are looked into very rigidly.. Caste prejudices are more keenly felt during the time of the communion services, the time when it ought not to be expressed at all. People of the lower castes are asked or obliged to come and kneel after all the so-called higher caste Christians" have been served. Difficulty is more felt when a person of the poorer community is ordained as a pastor. The people of the other communities refuse to take communion at his hands. This sort of thing happening in the Christian Church is deplorable. Yet there are hopeful signs for the future. Already there is much change in the Church for the better. In most churches people are at liberty to sit anywhere they like. The recent Hindu revival and the opening of temples to the Harijans have opened the eyes of the Christians.' These saddening facts show very clearly the Indian Church's need of the 'revolutionary Christ.' In the words of the Indian Christian editors of the *Madras Guardian* on June 5, 1941: 'Caste in the Christian community has lost much of its offensive form, but it has not lost its mischievous potency.'

## 5. Why Jesus Christ Attracts Caste-People

'And yet,' said our Indian Bishop in the 1935 article referred to, we cannot but be impressed with what Jesus Christ

has accomplished in a land like India, where the grant caste has held the people bound hand and foot for ages. Jesus Christ has a divine power to transform men, and allegiance to Him releases powers of mind soul and body issuing in nothing less than life from death. We have nearly 200 000 Christians in the Diocese and about 800 000 in the Telugu country. The vast majority of these have come out of communities that would be reckoned as Harijan in origin. The external transformation which has come about by reason of their internal regeneration is indisputable, and is witnessed to by the caste people in whose midst they live. I believe we have about 50 000 Christians of caste origin in all Missions of the Telugu country and a great majority of them say that they become Christians by observing the social economical and educational transformation that has been effected by the knowledge and worship of Jesus Christ. "Twenty years ago," said a rich land lord to me recently, "we called these depressed class people by their names and in a contemptuous manner now we cannot address them except with terms of respect. This is the work of Jesus Christ. And whole-hearted yielding to His demands is what has done it. Despite the occasional appearance of caste-spirit among so-called Christian people in India this is more and more the exception and not the rule. The Rev C. W. Posnett wrote after over 30 years in the Nizam's Dominions

I think there is no doubt at all that the thing that has impressed the caste people is the miracle that God has wrought in the out-caste. He has made gold out of clay. Especially the lives and characters of our Indian Ministers have had a great effect. For example, a high caste, exclusive Hindu Rām, asked if she could come and stay with our Indian Minister, Mr Samuel in Medak. Though she had a big house there, she actually came and stayed in his house three or four days. Twenty years ago she would never have crossed his threshold. As Dr Mackay of Prinstone has said 'The records of a Church in the Punjab enshrine a tale in which a high caste

Hindu and a member of a low caste were baptised at the same time.'

## 6. Einstein's New Discovery In The Christian Church

In these war-days it is well that people should not forget the testimony of Dr. Albert Einstein, one of the most gifted men in the history of science. Dr. Einstein has expressed this significant opinion regarding the Christian Church 'Being a lover of freedom, when the revolution came in Germany I looked to the universities to defend it, knowing that they had always boasted of their devotion to the cause of truth, but, no, the universities immediately were silenced. Then I looked to the great editors of the newspapers whose flaming editorials in days gone by had proclaimed their love of freedom, but they, like the universities, were silenced in a few short weeks. Then I looked to the individual writers who, as literary guides of Germany, had written much and often concerning the place of freedom in modern life, but they, too, were mute. Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing truth. I never had any such interest in the Church before, but now I feel a great affection and admiration because the Church alone has had the courage and persistence to stand for intellectual truth and moral freedom. I am forced to confess that what I once despised I now praise unreservedly'

## 7 Mahārāshtra's Passionate Desire For Spiritual Freedom

We use the term 'spiritual freedom' here in two senses, viz, the freedom of every individual to follow his own religious convictions without any hindrance from the society of which he forms a part, and the personal experience of moral and spiritual deliverance from the power of sin in all its forms. In a previous section we have shown how the Dnyāneshwar film thrilled the many thousands who gazed upon it and

pondered over its unfolding story. One of the most notable aspects of that film was the fearless way it condemned the caste-spirit in the 13th century which turned the life of Dnyāneshwar's entire family into little less than a hell on earth. In the 18th week of this film the Central Cinema in Bombay ran a press advertisement stating: "There is no doubt that 'Dnyāneshwar' has caught the public imagination. There is no heart that would not melt at the ordeals that Dnyāneshwar and his brother and sister go through in their childhood. The most heroic martyrdom of adults pales before the sight of the children's vain search for their missing parents and the quiet resolve with which they set about the task of securing what their parents had failed to secure—namely caste recognition." This advertisement was in *The Times of India*. In the same week the Marāṭhī dailies of Poona had a large-type advertisement condemning the Ālandīkar (the people of Ālandī) for stoning the Brahmin Dnyāneshwar whom they had out-casted. The fact that such advertisements and such pictures are so popular would seem to indicate that India is passionately desirous of religious freedom. In an address at Wilson College on April 19, 1922, the well-known Hindu writer Mr G. M. Thengé, said: "Gentlemen, I am proud of my religion and philosophy. How beautiful and grand they are! And yet how is one to account for the existence under them of the diabolical caste system which pervades the whole country to its ruin? How is one to account for the exercise of social tyranny over the depressed classes, the untouchables? The Christians are now our teachers and guides in this respect. They have no doubt taught and are teaching us how to practise love and charity by their own example. Their methods we have to learn and the influence of Christ in this respect over us is to my mind unmistakable. Let us hope that we shall soon see our grand theory of identity of souls and universal love mated with practice and that both the theory and practice will be ours. There are sure signs

that this will be so, sooner or later, or perhaps sooner than later.'

## 8. Mahārāshtra Brāhmīns Who Won Their Spiritual Freedom

The preceding chapters have sought to establish the fact that in the religious firmament of India the Mahārāstra Brāhmīn Dnyāneshwar of the 13th century must be regarded as one of the greatest luminaries. Before we bring our studies to a close it is well that Mahārāshtrians and all who labour among them should take to themselves encouragement from the fact that Mahārāshtrians of the 19th and 20th centuries also have won religious pre-eminence. While Mahārāshtra's Christian movement has not yet seen the tens of thousands coming to the Cross of Christ, in any 'Mass Movement' as in several other parts of India, it has nevertheless been honoured in giving to India three of India's greatest Christian luminaries, all of them originally Chitpāvan Brāhmīns, and all subsequently renowned for their Christian scholarship, viz, Nīlkanth Shāstrī Goreh, Nārāyan Vāman Tilak, and that brilliant woman Panditā Ramābāī who has been regarded by some as 'the most learned Indian woman of the 19th century' No other province in India has supplied three such shining leaders as these three Christian Mahārāshtrians of Brāhmīn birth who dedicated their great powers to Jesus Christ, one as philosopher, the second as a poet, and the third as a social reformer. A fourth and more recent case is that of the Karhāde Brāhmīn Pandit whose story we have told on pages 328-339 of this book

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## B

### DOES DNYĀNESHVAR'S HINDUISM PROVIDE A REMEDY FOR SIN?

#### CHAPTER XXI

#### 'FOR VITTHALPANT'S SIN THERE IS NO REMEDY

##### 1 The Religious Message Of The Dnyāneshwar Film

The portion of the Dnyāneshwar Film (see chapter III in this book) invested with the deepest pathos for ourselves as we sat entranced by each unfolding stage was the scene where the haughty Brāhmin declares with the approval of fellow Brāhmins 'For such a sin as that of Vitthalpant, there is in this world no possible remedy. In that sentence, and in other sentences in the same context, there is the revelation as by a lightning flash of the utter inadequacy of Hinduism to meet the poignant needs of broken hearts, broken by the consciousness of moral and spiritual defeat. For the whole catalogue of events leading up to that Brahmin verdict and the events issuing from it as well, throw a powerful search light on the tyranny of the Hindu caste system as seen in the ostracism, the contempt, the persecution which four innocent children and their equally innocent mother had to endure. Amid these tragedies the despairing verdict quoted above demonstrates the powerlessness of Hinduism to help men in the deepest need of their souls. For the official Hindu verdict was that the Hindu Scriptures provide no possible way of cleansing away Vitthalpant's sin, and that death itself was the one and only *prāyashchitta* (remedy) for his grave fault. In the Prabhāt Film, Vitthalpant and his wife go forth to their suicide by drowning themselves in the river and the entire

chapter of events surrounding this verdict supplies the most eloquent commentary we have ever seen on St. Paul's words, 'The wages of sin is death.' The official pronouncement by the recognized Hindu authorities of their helplessness in such a case of moral and spiritual need, and their confession that neither they nor any of the Hindu books could prescribe any conceivable remedy, should help to bring home to Mahārāshtra's earnest people the need of a Saviour which is not met by the age-long Hindu system. The six and a half centuries that have transpired since those moving events only serve to make more agonizing that confession of failure which affects two hundred and thirty millions of the human race. Equally moving and eloquent was the passionate cry of one of the film actors that upon each one there falls the urgent responsibility for correcting the deep faults of Hindu Society.

## 2. A Brāhmin Pandit On Brāhmin Duplicity

The following paragraph embodies the deliberate and considered view of the late Brāhmin Pandit N. R. Godbole. It is the most scathing piece of writing that our gentle Pandit of the *Poet Saints Series* ever wrote — 'Vitthal, Dnyāneshwar's father, was always uneasy in his mind and he wanted to enter the fourth stage of life, that of a *sannyāsī*, but as this could not be effected without the consent of his wife, he was for ever after her to grant this consent. Once in an unguarded moment the question came from the husband. "Shall I go to bathe (in the Ganges)?" The term "bathe in the Ganges" is often used in reference to many of India's sacred rivers. Therefore Vitthal's words were highly ambiguous, probably of set purpose. His mental meaning was "to bathe in the Ganges at Benāres," meaning thereby to go there to enter the *sannyāsī* stage of life. But the poor wife, possibly understanding the term to refer to the *local* Ganges, answered "Do." Though this word of permission was given all unintentionally it was quite enough for Vitthal, despite the fact that he knew

full well that in entering the fourth stage of life, before the birth of a male child, an orthodox Hindu's duty to his wife is left unfulfilled. Such was the religious requirement, and Vitthal was fully aware of it for he knew this could not be done without the clear and intelligent consent of his wife. By the term "going to bathe" the poor wife had no reason to suppose that her husband meant going to Benāres to bathe in the Ganges and to enter the fourth stage of life there. But Vitthal was bent on shaking off the burden of his family affairs, and hence he made no scruples about inflicting this cruelty. We call this cruelty for a married man has many moral and religious obligations. Vitthal's action was not only cruel but mean and deceitful. Some authors have praised him for this he deserves no praise, but severe blame. For Vitthal was no mere child when he got himself married. He was of an age to understand the responsibilities of a householder. If his mind was not inclined to bear these responsibilities he ought not to have married. Moreover, his marriage was the result of a divine command, and so his responsibilities became doubly sacred. From every standpoint his duty was to have satisfied his wife and her relatives, and prevent the anger which led to the bitter persecution of his children. He must have known his wife's unguarded and unintended reply could not possibly mean a clear consent. He was learned in the *śāstras* and knew what they laid down. But he wanted to desert his wife, and so he did not care to consider whether her casual reply "Do," was real or unreal or whether it was right to strain its meaning in order to achieve his purpose. He went to Benares, and there told the head of the *sannyāsis* a barefaced lie by saying that he was free from any such earthly ties as wife and children.

### 3 A Tragedy Of Sin

It would be difficult to find in the whole vast range of India's religious literature a more impressive illustration of



sin, of its subtlety and its blighting power, than that which greets us on the very threshold of Dnyāneshwar's career. In this train of events we have an equally impressive message on the sorrow and suffering that sin brings in its train. The lie which Rāmānand, the head of the *sannyāsī Āshram* at Benāres, heard from the lips of Vitthal, the Brāhmin father of Dnyāneshwar, to the effect that he had no wife, proved to be for Vitthal himself and his entire family the beginning of a sea of troubles. That it led to the abandonment of their four children by both parents, and eventually to their own suicide, was only one part of the tragedy that hung over the Ālandī home for many years. The untruth was all the more heinous because it was uttered in the sacred atmosphere of the Hindu *Āshram* and to the *guru* himself who is regarded as the very embodiment of the divine. We do not wish to suggest or even to imply that followers of the *bhakti mārga* are always guilty of moral misdemeanours, but it is undeniable that the teaching about the gods in some of the eighteen *Purānas* is sometimes degrading and that one main reason why some of these *Purānas* are so popular, lies in their 'outrageously indecent descriptions of the *Rāsatalā* and the loose ideas of morals permeating' those *Purānas* (Pandit Sītānāth Tattvabhūshan in *The Indian Messenger*, September 11, 1921).

#### 4. Immoral Practice And Pantheistic Belief

It was shown in chapter xv that Dnyāneshwar was an out-and-out *advaitist*, or to use the English equivalent, a thorough-going pantheist. Now while it is far from our purpose to suggest that all forms of pantheistic belief invariably lead to immoral practice, yet we think 'it is incontrovertible that pantheism (or *advaita*), in its blurring of the essential distinction between holiness and sin, does fail to set before men an absolute and eternal moral standard, and that this failure does make it fatally easy for men to sin.' Nīlkanth Shāstrī Goreh, the Marāthā Brāhmin who after 'conversion to Christ became

the Rev Nīlkanth Nehemiah Goreh has left on record how pained and shocked he was on discovering in the very act of heinous sin an ascetic whom he had previously admired so much as to desire to become his disciple. The saddest memory of all our experience of evangelistic work in Mysore, says the Rev W. E. Tomlinson of Mysore, is of a young man of the goldsmith caste who followed us out of his village after we had talked with his people on the holiness of Jesus Christ. He wept as he told us of his own *guru* who, declaring that he was one with the Absolute and so above the distinctions of sex and morality had the night before called the lad's sister to his "sacred" house to her ruin and his own endless shame. It is the glory of Christ that no word or action of His could ever be used to support either lust or selfishness. The Cross in its upstanding rectitude is the expression in time of God's eternal condemnation of sin and His essential and eternal demand for holiness.

## 5 The Sense Of Sin In The Bhakti Saints

There are very few greater religious needs in the India of today than a deepening of the personal consciousness of sin. We have already noted that one of the deepest faults of the Hindu society depicted so graphically in the Dnyaneshwar Film is its deficient sense of sin. On the other hand, we cannot agree that a sense of sin has been absent from India's religious literature, for the poems of Tukaram alone (1608-49 A. D.) contain hundreds of *abhangs* expressing Tukaram's deep consciousness of personal unworthiness and inward sinfulness. One example will suffice, the *abhang* in which Tukārām's haunting sense of guilt escapes in the following moving words: 'Fallen of fallen thrice fallen am I but do thou raise me by thy power I have neither purity of heart nor a faith firmly set at thy feet I am created out of sin, how often shall I repeat it? says Tukā. For more details and many illustrations from this great *bhakti* saint of Dehū, we must refer our

readers to pages 223-25 and 135-7 in our *Life And Teaching Of Tukārām* where we have indicated disagreement with our friend Dr. Nicol Macnicol on this subject in his beautiful *Psalms Of Marāṭhī Saints* (page 33), though he adopts the correct view in his noble book *The Living Religions Of The Indian People* when (on page 96) he allows to Tukārām 'the authentic note of contrition.' We have briefly summarized the evidence in our *Tukārām* article in volume 12 of Dr Hastings *Encyclopaedia Of Religion And Ethics*, (pages 467-468). To the foregoing should be added Mahīpati's 101 verses on confession of sin in his work *Aparādha Nivedana Stotra* (see Foreword to *Stories Of Indian Saints*, Vol 10, *Poet Saints*, pp xi-xiii) Here we must express deep dissent from the position taken up on this matter by Dr. A. Berriedale Keith, Regius Professor of Sanskrit and Comparative Philology in the University of Edinburgh, in the 11th volume of *The Encyclopaedia Of Religion And Ethics* (p 562a). Though in our Dnyāneshwar studies we have met nothing to compare with Tukārām's poignant self-accusations, yet we feel concerning Dr. Berriedale Keith's exposition of Hindu teaching on sin that while he renders excellent service by indicating certain Hindu views of sin to be altogether too mechanical and compromising, an aspect we can never afford to forget, yet his failure to recognize the deep moral anguish attaching to the sense of sin in many Hindu *bhakti* teachers must be pronounced unfortunate. Says Prof Keith 'The later Hinduism of the *Purānas* and the law digests, devote their energies to multiplying the number of sins, ceremonial, social and moral between which they make no distinction, but at the same time regard all those offences, of whatever degree, as capable of expiation by *prāyashchittas*, . . . or by the saving grace of a sectarian deity whose favour can be won by acts of pilgrimage or devotion of purely formal character—doctrines wholly incompatible with the development of any deep moral sense of the heinousness of wrongdoing in itself.' Apart from

the haunting sense of moral need in such South Indian Shaivite saints as Apparswāmi and Mānuka Vāsahar, very many of Tukārām's *abhangs* have the note of one which the late Sir Nārāyan Chandāvarkar translated 'They call me saint but they do not know how much of sinfulness there is in me. We therefore still hold to the position we set forth in our 1922 book on Tukārām when we stated (p. 225) that Dr Keith and other scholars need greatly to revise their estimates if they are rightly to understand India's age-long religious passion.

## 6 Divine Holiness The Only Touchstone

It is almost impossible correctly to assess the religious condition of one's own age and of one's own contemporaries, but unless the signs of the times on this subject are entirely misleading it must be agreed that a poignant sense of sin is not characteristic of the India of today. It must be confessed also that on this aspect of the religious life Dnyāneshwar does not afford his countrymen much help, for the haunting sense of heart guilt which drove the Dehu *bhakta* to God in penitence does not appear in the pages of Dnyāneshwar either in his biography or his poetry. This is one of those many surprises that always lie in wait for the student of *bhakti* though some authorities would probably explain this particular surprise by suggesting that it may be due to the fact that Dnyāneshwar was more philosophical than the sin-stricken Tukārām who was far more emotional. While this suggestion is helpful it is not an adequate explanation in the case of so God-intoxicated a man as was Dnyāneshwar since it is always the God-intoxicated who more vividly realize their own shortcomings. Possibly we are to see at work here that inadequate conception of the holiness of God so often to be noted in the Hindu poets and particularly noticeable in the aberrations on the part of the gods in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (x. 33. 30-35) aberrations

tions sometimes so grave that the *Bhāgavata Purāna* states: 'their conduct is sometimes correct.' Wherever the Divine holiness is compromised, all our ideas about sin are similarly stricken with guilty compromise.

## 7. Sin's Disdain Of God

Unless one gravely misinterprets his own contemporaries, the explanation of many of the evil tendencies of the present generation, in East and West alike, is the same as is given by St. Paul when he says concerning the people in the Roman Empire of his day, 'They refused to have God in their knowledge' (Romans 1:28) or as Dr. Moffatt renders the phrase, 'They disdained to acknowledge God any longer.' And the only possible explanation of the moral, often un-moral, attitude of many people to-day is this same attitude: 'They refused to have God in their knowledge.' St. Paul's withering words about the people of his day were justified by the fact that they knew a great deal better. They could offer no plea of ignorance. Nature all around displayed God's greatness, bounty and government, and upon every soul was written the law called conscience, but to all this they deliberately closed their eyes. The full force of St. Paul's original Greek means that the people had definitely considered whether to retain God as an object of thought and reverence and they had come to a negative decision. The name of God on the page of creation they determined not to read, the divinity within them they stifled and suppressed. Thus they dethroned God from reason and conscience. Such impiety was to St. Paul heinous beyond expression. His feelings are best given in a rendering by an able scholar: 'They did not think God worth having in their knowledge.' When we ask: What do such words speak to us today? the question must be answered by another: Have we any sense of the majesty and spotlessness of God? We are often told that sin hinders our vision of God, but the deeper truth is that we can only gain a true view of sin by a true con-

ception of God. The Bible idea of God will give us the Bible idea of sin, an insult to his majesty and outrage to His love. We must first behold the face of God if we are to shrink from the sight of sin. It was in the searchlight of Paul's knowledge of the High and Holy One that pagan vice appeared so black. The deities of Greek and Roman thought were examples of passion and vice. Egyptian gods were subjects of degraded representations and objects of a still more degraded worship. And the Hindu Tukārām pronounces adultery with God as 'blessed' (see *Life And Teaching Of Tukārām* pp. 246-7) With such ideas of a Divine Being we are not surprised to read of people winking at sin. Someone has said that it was the unveiling of the divine sanctity that gave birth to the Hebrew idea of sin. It was certainly the Cross which was to bring this idea to full maturity and lay bare sin in all its essential wickedness. Whilst the Divine holiness and therefore sin's loathsomeness are two leading truths of the Old Testament, and whilst Christ's revelation of the Holy Father has shown God not a whit more complacent towards evil, it is left to Calvary with its manifestation of infinite patience, meekness and love, to expose to full view the foulness and hineousness of sin.

## 8. Sin A Breach Of Personal Friendship With God

Not long ago there was published by a South Indian scholar Principal D. S. Sharmā of Pachayappa's College in Madras an almost ideal statement of the present-day Hindu position as held by those Hindus who seek to harmonize their views with the best liberal thought. There is much in Principal Sharmā's tolerance and comprehensiveness which reminds the reader of the 13th century Dnyāneshwar. For example, The central part of every true religion is a profound mystical experience in which the soul feels the nearness of God. This is excellent, but when we come to consider the God whose mysterious presence is to be felt we find set forth an impersonal

conception of God, one unsatisfying result of which is a conception of sin altogether inadequate, so that the furthest Professor Sharmā can go in defining sin is to say that 'a sinner is not only out of harmony with the society around him, the laws of which he breaks, but also with the kingdom of God whose law he sets aside' (*What Is Hinduism?* pp 26, 64). This is of course quite correct but it does not go far enough. As Dr E. C. Dewick points out cogently 'Where the conception of God is predominantly impersonal, the Christian conception of sin as *a breach of personal friendship with God* is not realised' (*Young Men Of India, Burma And Ceylon*, October 1940, p 264). It is this view of sin 'as a breach of personal friendship with God' that one misses from the pages of Dnyāneshwar. And where such a 'breach' is not realized the real gravity of sin is not recognized. The consciousness of such a 'breach' is mercy's painful object-lesson of the weariness of sin, meant to lead us back to God. The anger of the Holy God and Father against man's sin is the anger of Infinite Love, and Love's anger is always the most intense and awful, but it is something more than anger. It is Infinite Love showing its infinite ingenuity and persistence by leading us a roundabout way to goodness. The true end of Divine judgment is not only to assert God's authority, but to correct, restore, reform us. Sin's penalties are to exercise a chastening influence. Sin's dire pains are meant to lead us to the healing balm of a true repentance. 'The furies of judgment are also angels of grace' guiding sinful men to God. Here is the light that pierces the gloom of sin the flaming wrath of the Holy One is a cleansing flame, purifying the soul from sin. The redemptive is at work in the punitive 'where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Romans 5 21)'. This it is that constitutes Calvary's secret. When St. Paul had proved sin and the sinner's guilt he took his readers to the Cross.

## 9 Sense Of Helplessness Of India's Saints

That the saints of Mahārāshtrian *bhakti* are in desperate need of some remedy is clear from many of their poignant cries for divine help. Take as an example of them all, the noble-minded Bahinabai who says (see volume 5 of this series on the Poet Saints, page 99) "Wherever we ask, we find our doubts are not solved. No one who really understands the heart tells me. On whose words then shall I rely to give my mind rest? They tell you very many rules and methods, various forms of worship and various *mantras*. Some prescribe repeating of *mantras*, sitting in the five different postures such being the importance ascribed to how one sits. Others tell you of sacred waters, of austerities and rites. Others again tell you an infinite number of ceremonials in worship. Says Bahinābāi, My mind is not at rest. The battlefield of ignorance I see everywhere. This moving plaint of this faithful woman-disciple of Tukārām in the 17th century is typical of Indian saints. In January 1934 the notable German scholar Professor Witte of Berlin, after making a significant confession of what he plainly described as self-conscious German heathenism gave to a Berlin conference one great conclusion he had reached in his researches concerning Indian thought on the problem of sin. Here are Dr Witte's words. They (the Indian sages) have taken it indeed so seriously that they have discovered no remedy except in setting up the doctrine of reincarnation according to which man is forced to pass through innumerable lives on earth a fearful prospect! And these many reincarnations are necessary because it is impossible to wipe out evil. It must be paid for in the tortures of ever new existence. And many other ways India has striven, like all other peoples, to devise means for the removal of guilt. By sacrifices, by asceticism, by prayers, by offerings. Yet never was peace attained. It was in India that the idea arose that sin might be atoned for in the cleansing



fires of purgatory, but neither there could peace be found. The longing for a Redeemer is found in these Eastern faiths, and with it went the hope of a Divine incarnation.'

## 10. Man's Need Of A Mediator

Before we enter upon the consideration of what Dr. Witte describes as India's 'longing for a Redeemer' and India's 'hope of a Divine incarnation,' it is fitting to recall that some of Dnyāneshwar's greatest admirers today, the Prārthanā Samājists of Mahārāshtra, in their noble campaign against all forms of idol-worship, go to the extreme length of affirming there is no need of a Mediator. The Prārthanā Samāj is a lineal descendant of the older Brāhmo Samāj, and in the 'Māghotsav' articles of January 1941, an earlier Brāhmo Samāj principle of January 1904 was set forth with approval as follows 'The Brāhmo Samāj has been introducing spiritual and direct worship of God *without the intervention of any mediator*' ( *The Indian Messenger*, January 1941, page 5 ). The words we have italicized surely overlook the alienating influences of sin. Thinking people the world over have come to feel more than ever that despite education and all other kinds of progress, the present state of the world supplies painful proof of the sinfulness of the human heart. This sinfulness necessitates a Mediator between sinful man and the All Holy God. To our earnest Brāhmo and Prārthanā Samāj friends we commend something written by Dr. William Temple, Archbishop of York. Towards the close of a moving chapter on 'The Hunger of Natural Religion' Dr. Temple states 'Man cannot meet his own deepest need, nor find for himself release from his profoundest trouble. What he needs is not progress, but redemption.' The book we quote from ( page 513 ) is entitled *Nature, Man And God*, the Gifford Lectures of 1932-4, obtainable at Macmillan and Co. It is a book of 530 pages worthy of being studied by every Brāhmo Samājist. Another of Dr. Temple's statements is this on page 401 'All is of

*God the only thing of my very own which I can contribute to my own redemption is the sin from which I need to be redeemed* It is only in the light of the two sovereign truths of God's love and man's sin that we can in any way understand the luminous mystery of Calvary and its unique act. As St. Paul has expressed it God proves His love for us by this, that Christ died for us when we were still sinners (Romans 5 2) In the Death of the Sinless Son there was on the one hand God's proclamation of the wickedness of sin that men *could* crucify the Holy One of God but on the other hand that same Death was also the proclamation of man's redemption In the Death of Christ we see sin's most dreadful condemnation but from it comes also the only ray of hope for a straying world There in the Cross, sin was judged in the Person of the Sinless One and that redemptive judgment delivers men from the hopelessness of eternity We are all sinners in God's pure eyes. Every one of us bears the evil stain. We have all tasted the remorse of sin What we every one need is a peace-obtaining penitence If we will but go, we shall find a Refuge in the outstretched arms Faith in the mercy and power of Calvary will make us whiter than the untrodden snow

So after all there *was* a remedy for Vitthalpant's sin but neither Vitthalpant nor his Brahmin jury knew about it! The haunting question arises Are we making the remedy for sin adequately known to India to-day?

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## DOES DNYĀNESHVAR'S HINDUISM ASSURE THE SOUL OF A FATHER-GOD ?

### CHAPTER XXII

#### THE MORAL TEST OF AN INCARNATION

#### 1. A Brāhmo's Warning About Hindu 'Avatārs' & Religious 'Indecency'

Dr. Urquhart, Emeritus Principal of the Scottish Church College in Calcutta, has recently pointed out that 'the test of an Incarnation will be the fulness with which it exhibits the nature of God,' and that 'whereas the Krishna of the *Gītā* has very high ethical significance' it has to be admitted that 'the Krishna of the *Purāṇas* may be an incitement to degraded worship' It is in this moral test of holiness that 'the plurality of incarnations,' or, to use a more correct Hindu phrase, the countless *avatārs*, fail so pitifully. How great is India's need of the Christian message of the Holy Love of God, as revealed in the one and only full incarnation of God, finds frequent illustration in India's religious press, especially in some references to India's most popular *avatār* (or incarnation), Krishna. One of the most noteworthy religious organs in India is *The Indian Messenger* which for nearly six decades past has set forth the Theistic principles of the Sādhāran Brāhmo Samāj of Calcutta. One of its regular contributors is the great Brāhmo Samājist, Pandit Sitānāth Tattvabhūshan, who is one of India's most notable scholars by whatever standard he is measured. In the issue of June 4, 1939, the learned Pandit reviewed a new book entitled *Premadharma* (*The Religion of Love*) by an author named Hirendranāth Datta, whose book

showed wide acquaintance with the literature of Christian mysticism as well as with Vaishnavism. Pandit Tattvabhushan felt it necessary to point out "We must confess that the juxtaposition of these two very different kinds of extracts those from Vaishnava and Christian writers has a somewhat grotesque effect on the reader's mind. The latter have nothing of the indecency which characterises the former." Coming to our author's detailed treatment of Vaishnava *Prema* in the form of the love between Radha and Krishna every one of these matters has, our author says, a physical and spiritual meaning the first being the visible relation of human lovers and the second the supersensuous meeting of the finite with the Divine Self.

## 2. The Krishna Myth & Its Disastrous Influence

A spiritual interpretation is put upon dealings which are obviously amorous and sexual but the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* says at the end of its *Rāsa pañcādhyaṃya* that Krishna, as the inner self of all was above all moral restrictions and his dealings with the Gopis, as narrated in the *Rasalīlā*, should not even be thought of by men, far from being imitated by them. How this warning has been treated by the followers of Bengāl and Gujarāt Vaishnavism is well known to those who care to inquire into the moral atmosphere created by these forms of religion. However in this present book, continues the Calcutta Pandit, Mr Datta deals specially with Krishna's dealings with Rādhā. Our author regards the whole story of the Gopis and their chief Rādhā as quite unhistorical pure myth.. The Gauriya Vaishnava poets, with their wrong idea of Rādhā and Krishna as historical persons and as both divine beings and human lovers, made the egregious mistake of trying to teach *Premadharmā* (the religion of love) by erotic poetry! The result has been most disastrous on the moral and religious life of this province (Bengāl) and other provinces influenced by it. True *prema* (love) and *bhakti* (devotion) can come only

from a direct realisation of God's presence and incessant activity in every part of our life. The literature that helps such realisation is alone relevant to the matter, and not any amount of semi-historical or imaginary narration, least of all such as oversteps the limits of decency and moral purity.' Such a warning, and by such a scholar, is most timely.

### 3. When The Polestar Of Religion Becomes A Shifting Factor

This same Brāhmo Pandit Sītānāth Tattvabhūshan showed nearly twenty years ago how the degradation of Vaishnava worship 'from spiritual contemplation...to the worship of images' is traceable to the fact that 'the Supreme Being was represented as of the human form with a female consort, both having human passions and appetites,' as described in the *Brahma-Vaivarta Purāna* (*Indian Messenger*, Oct. 23, 1921). The *Bhāgavata Purāna* which, along with the *Gītā*, supplies the basis of Mahārāshtrian religion, sets forth Krishna 'as a partial incarnation of God' and as bearing grave 'moral stigma,' his character being marred by 'illicit love.' When we go to some others of the eighteen *Purānas* at whose sullied fount even Dnyāneshwar drank, these, as we have already seen, are popular in Indian villages largely because of their 'indecent descriptions' and 'loose ideas of morals' (See Chapter xxī, 3, pp 378-9). If such teaching creates moral confusion instead of the hope of salvation, no better result is obtainable from some other parts of this Mahārāshtrian scripture, the *Bhāgavatā Purāna* which in x, 33, 30-35 says 'The transgression of virtue and the daring acts which are witnessed in gods (*Ishvarnām*) must not be charged as faults to these glorious persons Let no one *other than a god* even in thought practice the same' (we owe this reference to *The Crown of Hinduism* by J. N. Farquhar, but the italics are ours) With such grave moral aberrations in basic ideas regarding the divine character itself, the one unerring result is that the polestar of religion becomes

a shifting factor. Where 'adultery with God' is pronounced blessed as by that other *bhakta* Tukārām, though it may only be by way of allegory, men must inevitably relax into an adultery of the soul and this is exactly what has happened as is seen in the idolatrous conditions among many of Dnyaneshwar's people today.

#### 4 Lokamānya B. G. Tilak On Sins Of Rāma And Other Gods

Recent literature circulating freely among Dnyaneshwar's own Marathi-speaking people of today supplies illustrations all too plain of the moral aberrations of the popular gods. In chapter XVI we referred to the English translation in two large volumes of that epoch making book, *Gīta Rahasya* (or *Secret of the Gīta*), by the late Lokamānya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. One of the most striking passages in this notable work illustrates the literary honesty of the author where he makes clear and unambiguous statements about the god Rama having committed sin, and other venerated deities as well. The passage is found on pages 97-98 of the authoritative English translation of *Gīta Rahasya* as follows. The sinless Rāmachandra discarded his wife (though she had passed through the ordeal of fire) merely on the ground of public criticism and the same Ramachandra in order that Sugriva should be on his side entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with him, and killed Vālī who had in no way wronged him! Parashurāma murdered his own mother at the behest of his father and as regards the Pandavas, five of them had only one wife! If you consider the gods in the heavens, then some of them are the paramours of Ahilya, whereas others are seen lying in the sky with mutilated bodies, being wounded by the arrows of Rudra, as was Brahmadeva because he ran after his own daughter in the form of a stag (*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 3.33). With these things before his mind's eye Bhavabhūti has put the words. One must not attach too much importance

lillel the demons named Pauloma and Kālal brāhṃa, yet on that account, not a hair of my head has been touched". . After having described his various deeds as mentioned above, Indra says to Pratardhana " Bearing in mind that that man who has fully realised his Self is not prejudicially affected by patricide, matricide, infanticide, theft, or any other sinful actions, try and realise in the first instance what the Ātman is, so that all your doubts will be answered." This last passage about Indra to Pratardhana has also been rendered as follows ' Indra, after giving the account of his deeds as cited above, goes on to tell Pratardhana, " To him who has attained complete knowledge of self, no guilt attaches for the murder of mother, the murder of father, the killing of a foetus, or for theft, or for any other deed. With this in mind do thou first of all learn what spirit is , then all thy doubts will disappear." '

## 5. Beware Of The Disciples Of Such 'Gods '

The practical implications of these statements in the Hindu sacred books about the sins of the Hindu ' gods ' were brought out nearly a century ago by the late R W Hume on a preaching tour in the Southern Konkan during October and November 1848 The story is told on page 133 of Dr Robert Speer's notable book, *George Bowen of Bombay*, published in 1938 There George Bowen states ' Returning through the bazaar about sundown, a crowd gathered round us, whom Brother Hume addressed....One person, as is generally the case,

took the lead in defending their doctrines and practices but after a while the crowd opened and admitted another who had been sent for as better able to manage the discussion. After a while the man came out with a declaration that there was no proper distinction between sin and righteousness, seeing that all things and all acts were of God. Brother Hume called upon all present to look on this man "He considers thieving no sin take care then of your property he considers adultery no sin be careful therefore that he does not cross your threshold falsehood is no sin put no confidence then in what he says. When he speaks, shut your ears, having nothing to do with his doctrines, for he is a man who says there is no sin in teaching false doctrines." The man was utterly confounded. The people seemed gratified, and we came away. Nor do these things apply only to Hindus. The moral tests set forth in the foregoing principles apply equally to Christian people who are so deeply humbled by the present state of the world.

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## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE ATHEISTICAL ASPECT OF BRĀHMIN PHILOSOPHY

In view of the growing irreligion and atheism seen all over India today ( see sections 4-6 in this chapter ), Dnyāneshwar and his *bhakti* successors among the Mahārāshtra Poet Saints have a contribution to make which, though but partial, is of enduring value ( see sections 8-10 below ) Before we consider present-day irreligious tendencies in India it may be worth while to pause and investigate briefly the atheistical background which many notable scholars have detected in some aspects of the Vedāntic thought underlying Dnyāneshwar's whole teaching, especially since these may be responsible in part for India's modern drift towards atheism. We shall then better appreciate Dnyāneshwar's remedy.

#### 1. Nīlkanth Shāstrī Goreh On Hindu Atheism

(1) How far Hinduism is from assuring the soul of a Father-God is illustrated by Nīlkanth Nehemiah Goreh on *Hindu Philosophy Examined* where this well known Mahārāshtra Brāhmin convert sets forth the atheistic aspect of certain features of Brāhmin philosophy At the outset there is need of a caution expressed in the preface to the English edition of Goreh's *Refutation* ( the same book ) where the translator rightly emphasizes that ' there are scores of terms belonging to the nomenclature of Hindu philosophy, precise equivalents of which have not yet been wrought out for us,' therefore ' in order really to penetrate the mysteries of Hinduism, we could scarcely do better than commit ourselves to the guidance of Christianized Brāhmins ' The merest glance through the 284 pages of Goreh's 1862 book serves to show how highly technical

Goreh's discussion was in view of his having written the work as a *Shāstrī* for *Shāstris* the list at the end of his volume of the principal Sanskrit books quoted in the work comprises some forty Sanskrit books. The work is divided into three sections and twenty chapters, and the thoroughness of the method of treatment is indicated by the fact that many pages contain only one or two lines of text, with many lines of technical footnotes explaining the Sanskrit references. We give below a few samples of the line of argument concerning the six philosophical systems of the Brahmīns viz., the *Sāṅkhya* *Yoga* *Mīmāṃsā* *Vedānta* *Vaiśeṣika* and *Nyāya*

(2) Nīlkanth Nehemiah Shastri Goreh is particularly severe on the atheistic element in the *Sāṅkhya* system of Hinduism, leading its Brāhmīn expounders to conclude there was no need of a God. In four directions the *Mīmāṃsakas* err greatly viz., *first* in not acknowledging God *secondly*, while they do not acknowledge God, yet they believe in virtue and vice *thirdly* they lay upon the heads of men the burden of rites and ceremonies and *fourthly* they maintain that the Veda has existed from eternity. A little later Goreh observes

To find that the *Mīmāṃsā* esteems the Veda to be infallibly authoritative, and nevertheless decides that the gods named in it are all imaginary and that the relations concerning them there are mere fables and to find that, though Indra is denied to exist, yet to make offerings in his name is sufficient to ensure great reward, cannot but strike one with astonishment. Wherever allege the *Mīmāṃsakas* the gods and their exploits are spoken of in the Veda, it is not intended to recount actual facts the end in view being to magnify the benefit of ritual acts and so to allure men to engage in them. But how can anyone who has the slightest discrimination say after reading the Veda that the persons who originally addressed its hymns to Indra and others, did not themselves believe these to be real divinities? And who can imagine a man doing worship to an unreal god, and singing praises to a nonentity and imploring

nobody, in the expectation of receiving therefore eminent recompense ?'

(3) In his second section Goreh shows how the *Nyāya* and *Vaisheshika* systems in Hinduism 'are quite in the dark touching God's holiness' and he concludes his chapter on the subject with the words 'They have transformed God into a hard-natured huckster, who secures His pay from His customers, and sells His wares by rigid tale, weight, and measure'

(4) Summarizing the *Vedānta* system of Hindu thought, Nilkanth Nehemiah Shāstrī Goreh gives the following warning 'I warn my readers against being misled by the notions, so prevalent among the vulgar, that, according to the *Vedānta*, Brahma was once void of qualities, and then, assuming them, made the world, and that some small portion of the pure Brahma parted from him, got deluded by illusion, and then became souls, which souls, when they free themselves from illusion, will be united to Brahma, etc etc The teachers of the *Vedānta* do not allege that Brahma was once void of qualities, and subsequently, taking them upon him, formed the universe, but they allege that to be without them has ever distinguished him, and ever will distinguish him.'

(5) On the question of the soul being one with the Supreme Spirit, our converted Mahārāshtra Brāhmin remarks: 'It is a maxim of the *Vedānta*, that "the soul is Brahma itself, and nothing other" How, I would ask the *Vedāntins*, can this be? For they assert that, on the one hand, the soul errs by reason of ignorance, and that on the other hand, Brahma is, in essence, ever pure, intelligent and free, and can never for a moment be otherwise Still they maintain that the soul is Brahma, and, with intent to reconcile their contradiction, they resort to the most elaborate mystification'

(6) In stating his considered conclusion, this 'Christianized Brāhmin' philosopher ventures to 'ask any thoughtful man, whether this scheme deserves to be called theistic.

Viewed superficially it has, I allow a guise of theism and yet, when investigated critically I cannot see that it is any thing but a sort of atheism. The distinctive article of theism is, the belief in a God but God is eliminated from the *Vedānta*. Its Brahma is neither creator of the world nor its preserver nor its lord in short, the world is out of relation to him. Let the *Vedāntins* give to such an object the title of Brahma, or that of Supreme Spirit still their doing so does not make them theists.

## 2. Atheism In Ancient Hinduism

(1) Recent examinations of the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy in Brāhminism more than sustain the crushing indictment of its atheistic elements made eighty years ago by Nīlkanth Nehe-miah Shāstri Goreh. For an authoritative investigation on this subject the reader may refer to the relevant articles on each of the six Hindu philosophical systems, viz. the *Sāṅkhya* Yoga, *Mīmāṃsā* Vedānta, *Val̥keshika*, and *Nyāya* in the thirteen volumes of Dr James Hastings *Encyclopaedia Of Religion And Ethics*. As this monumental work is not accessible to some readers we here give extracts from these articles that bear on the subject. Hinduism and many kindred topics are dealt with by Dr Richard Garbe, the Professor of Sanskrit and of the History of Religion in the University of Tübingen.

(2) In the article on Atheism In Ancient India Dr Garbe states. The beginnings of Indian atheism can be traced back into the Vedic period. In the *R̥gveda* the national god Indra is derided in several passages (iv 24 10 x. 119) and we read (ii. 12. 5 viii. 100 3) of people who absolutely denied his existence even in those early days. We have here the first traces of that naïve atheism which is so far from indulging in any philosophical reflexion that it simply refuses to believe what it cannot visualize. When the old Vedic religion developed into pantheism the figures of the old gods faded and

became transient creatures But, as such, they still lived in the philosophic systems of India, even in the atheistic *Sāṅkhya* system ..In India, recognition of these faded gods of the people has been fully reconciled with the atheistic view of the world. In the *Sāṅkhya* system, belief in gods who have risen to evanescent godhead ( *Dnyāneshvara*, *Kāryeshvara* ) has nothing whatever to do with the question of God Eternal ( *utyeshvara* ). The positive way in which the existence of God is denied is one of the characteristic features of the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, which on that account is also continually denoted as *mrīshvara* ( " godless " ) Again and again in the *Sāṅkhyasūtras* it is stated that the existence of God cannot be proved... The denial of God in the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy is in essence the result of the following ideas (1) the doctrine that there is inherent in unconscious matter the force which operates with physical necessity to develop itself for the purely receptive souls , and (2) the general Indian conception of the after-effects of the actions of living beings, which instigate that natural force and guide its activity into definite channels. . These and similar reflexions had certainly already forced themselves upon Kapila, the originator of the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, when he decided to take the bold step of publicly declaring for atheism This atheism of the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, somewhat softened by the recognition of the gods of the people, was taken over, as we have already noted, into Buddhism and the religion of the Jains But in all probability it also had an influence upon two schools of Brāhmin philosophy, the *Varīsheshika* and the *Nyāya*. These two schools were originally atheistic, and did not go over to theism until after their amalgamation ' ( *E. R. E.* vol 2, pp. 185-6 ).

### 3. Atheism In Modern Hinduism

(1) Writing on ' Atheism In Modern India ' Dr George A Grierson, Superintendent of the Linguistic Survey of India, observes ' In Modern India, philosophic atheism still survives

in the religion of the Jains. The atheism of the *Sāṅkhya* school is still professed by those learned men who follow that system of philosophy and these and the Jains are the only real atheists of modern India (*E R E* vol 2 pp. 185-6) That this verdict is much too optimistic will appear from our later sections (4-6) in this chapter

(2) In his *E R E* article on the *Nyāya* system of Brāhmin philosophy Dr R. Garbe affirms 'The *Vaiśeṣhika* and *Nyāya-Sūtras* the treatises upon which the two schools are founded, contain no mention of God. Since they moreover assert the eternal and uncreated nature of both soul and matter, and conceive the fate of the individual in harmony with the universal Indian view as the result of his good and evil deeds in the present or earlier existences, there can be no doubt of the originally atheistic character of both systems. Probably we ought to recognize here the influence of the *Sāṅkhya* system.. When later the *Vaiśeṣhika* and *Nyāya* systems came to be blended together the combined school adopted theistic views, but never saw in the personal God whom they assumed, the creator of matter (*E R E* Vol 9 p. 424)

(3) Writing on the *Sāṅkhya* philosophical system in Hinduism Dr Garbe declares The founder of the *Sāṅkhya* system was a clear and practical thinker of an altogether different class from the authors of the Upanishads, who, in a lofty and enthusiastic spirit, endeavoured to solve the great riddle of existence. Kapila [ before the middle of the 6th century B C. (*E R E*, Vol. 7 p. 659)] did not attempt to find unity in everything but sought to maintain variety. He not only rejected the Brahman, the All Soul, but emphatically denied the existence of God. It is true that he continued to hold the ordinary Indian views to the extent of believing in the transient forms of the popular religion, in gods, demi-gods, and demons, together with heavens and hells but this popular faith had nothing at all to do with the question of a real eternal God

in the theistic sense of an independent creator and ruler of the universe. The denial of a God of this nature is one of the characteristic features of the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, and the system is therefore in India described explicitly as atheistic' (*E. R. E.*, vol 11, p 180).

(4) Having shown in his *E. R. E.* article on *Yoga* that one of the chief characteristics of the *Yoga* philosophy is its 'rejection of the atheistic views of the *Sāṅkhya*' philosophy, Dr. Garbe points out 'The object of the *Yoga* system in inserting the conception of a personal God into the *Sāṅkhya* is merely to satisfy the theists, and to facilitate the propagation of the theory of the universe expounded in the *Sāṅkhya*. The idea of God, far from being organically interwoven in the *Yoga* system, is only loosely inserted. It is evident that this is no God in our sense of the term, and that we have to do with perplexing speculations the aim of which is to conceal the originally atheistic character of the system, and to bring the assumption of God into bare accord with its fundamental teaching. Assuredly these speculations prove, were there any need at all for proof, that in the real *Sāṅkhya-Yoga* there is no room for a personal God' (*E. R. E.* vol 12, pp 831-2).

#### 4. Anti-Religion In Present-Day India

##### (1) *Vedāntic Philosophy and Secularism Allies*

Such being the state of the case concerning Hindu philosophy it is no way surprising to find atheism and secularism greatly increasing all over India today. Anyone who doubts this, need only read the 1931 Report of 'The Commission On Christian Higher Education In India' of which the distinguished Chairman was Dr A D Lindsay, Master of Balliol College Oxford. His fellow-members on the commission were Dr. W Adams Brown of New York, Dr S. K. Datta, Canon. A. W. Davies, Principal W J. Hutchins of U. S A, Principal N K Mukerji of Delhi and Dr Nicol Macnicol. They found 'in

considering the India of the present day that Hinduism and Islam are largely losing their hold over the mind of the ordinary student and are being replaced by an irreligious materialism that there is little in either Hinduism or Islam which can resist the irreligious influences of economic and psychological determinism (*The Christian College In India* p. 148) They used language which is of peculiar interest in light of our conclusions in the section preceding the present one, viz. As a matter of fact, the philosophy of *Vedānta* and the life of secularism are perfectly natural allies (*Ibid.*, p. 54-55) They speak of the setting in of a strong current among the educated elements of even this traditionally religious people towards what has been called secularism or "anti religion" This tendency is much more marked in some provinces than in others. It is perhaps most strongly evident in Bombay Presidency and least so in Bengal The political aspect of this anti religious movement may be traced in the exclusion of the religious question altogether from the Nehru plan for an Indian Constitution and in the attitude to religion of such an outstanding leader of the younger India as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru The Young League of which he is the leading figure does no more in its Constitution than state that it aims at fighting communalism and working for the abolition of antiquated social and religious customs, but as a biographer of Pandit Jawaharlal says this states its ideals rather euphemistically The same writer describes the League as an organisation to fight religion and that no doubt represents the spirit that inspires many of its adherents. One may certainly say in the words of a leading Ārya Samājist, one concerned just as the Christian educationalist is to promote religion that the young men of India to-day are more occupied with "the outward polish" of life than with its inward religious springs. A Syrian Christian teacher in Trāvancore went so far as to say that it seemed to him that religion was dying out of the heart of the educated Hindu youth of the present genera-



tion. That it is possible to say that of Hindu India is a grave portent and presents a challenge and a call to the Christian Church and the Christian College' (*Ibid.*, pp. 46-47).

### (2) *Indian Hostility To Religion*

The 1931 College Commission Report noted 'a decided movement away from all religion' and their diagnosis is particularly worthy of note. 'This may take the form of difference to the precepts of their religion, neglect of its appointed prayers and its appointed fasts. This difference is said to be particularly marked at Aligarh, which should be the headquarters of loyalty to Islam. But not only do we find such difference, which, after all, might be found among students at almost any time. The same definite hostility to religion which we found to be present among Hindus is increasingly present also among educated Muslims. Lāhore and Peshāwar are said to be aggressively irreligious, and the example of Russia is exercising continuously its influence upon the Muslim as upon the Hindu. Whether this secularist spirit is more powerful among Hindus or among Muslims is a question upon which there is some difference of opinion. The opinion, however, of an Ārya Samāj Professor that the situation was more serious among Hindus is probably to be accepted. As he pointed out, there is more education among Hindus, and one of the causes of this abandonment of religion is, undoubtedly, the influence of science as it is taught in most Indian colleges and of the scientific determinism which accompanies it. There are evident indications that a leading Muslim was not too alarmist when he spoke of India as "this growingly irreligious land"' (*Ibid.*, pp. 53-54)

### (3) *Secularist Challenge To Religion In India*

'We have dealt already,' said the 1931 Report, 'with this new enemy which is making its presence felt among the educated classes in every province of India among Hindus, among Muslims, among Parsis, and within the Christian

Church as well. Secularism is indeed the common enemy of all the religions since it demands in India, as it does elsewhere, in the name of reason and progress that religion shall be rejected in a world where religion has no rights. It is largely the product in India of a godless education, of interpretations of the world in science and in history that find no place in them for God. A missionary who was intimately acquainted with a group of Hindu students declared that for them their old religion had no longer any interest, and a knowledge of it on his part would have given him no access to their needs. It would be a mistake to generalise from facts like these, but that they are facts indicates, as other evidence also proves, that this spirit is abroad and spreading. The works of Bertrand Russell, we are told are in constant demand in bookshops in Madras, being bought by students, Christian and non Christian alike. Giant Pagan is indeed far from being toothless and impotent (*Ibid.*, p. 54)

#### (4) *Bombay University And Irreligious Cynicism*

In June and July of 1928 Bombay University circles were disturbed by a discussion in the Senate which finally decided by 23 votes to 17 in favour of appointing a committee to examine and report how far it is advisable and feasible to inculcate a theistic attitude in our system of education in general and in affiliated colleges in particular. The columns of cynical criticism on this proposal that appeared in the newspapers of Western India, after this resolution was passed proved the truth of Sir Stanley Reed's diagnosis that Bombay was getting too materialistic. One educationalist regarded the University Senate resolution as sheer perverseness and the appointing of the committee as an exhibition of imbecility. The mover of the resolution was Principal G. N. Gokhale, of the Civil Engineering College, Karachi and he stood his ground nobly. In one letter to the press he bravely wrote: *I am not ashamed to own my belief that some Omnipresent, Omniscient, and*

Omnipotent one guides the destinies of this Universe, and in common with hundreds of others I have felt the touch of His loving hand at various times of my life, one of the latest occasions being the one when this proposal for a committee was passed by the Senate, against my own expectation. Such a belief,' said Principal Gokhale, 'has given me strength in my difficulties and that is why I am anxious most respectfully to invite the attention of my countrymen to this inner source of strength.'

(5) '*That Baneful Thing Called God*'

One of the more harmless samples in the Bombay newspaper discussion of 1928 was as follows:—'I was amused rather than surprised at the adoption by the Bombay University Senate of Principal Gokhale's resolution for appointing a Committee to report on the feasibility of inculcating a theistic attitude in our system of education in general and in colleges affiliated to the Bombay University in particular. What tickled me was the sacred duty with which this particular committee was charged. Think of it! What a sublime job! The Committee is to explore the avenues through which the exiled God is to be smuggled back into his throne, and our young men and women who have to receive their education in schools and colleges affiliated to the Bombay University are to be inoculated with strong doses of the "Divine" as an antidote to materialism and atheism. The materialistic and agnostic tendencies growing among our educated men and women are the result of the historical process against which no resistance is possible, at a certain stage in human evolution these tendencies are inevitable, and far from being harmful or disastrous to human welfare, their further development alone will enable man to solve his problems to reach his goal.' The Bombay newspaper letter continued 'It has been the proud privilege of man to fight against ignorance, superstition and blind belief, and by fighting against these he has also fought

against that mysterious and baneful thing called God. Of all the people in the world it is we Indians that require more and more materialism. We have had too much of religion too much of God, too much of futile philosophy that accounts for our position today as a bankrupt nation. Doubtless the closing portion of the foregoing may be due in part to those woes of India that are caused by much that masquerades under the name of religion, but this can hardly apply to the rank irreverence of the earlier portion.

## 5 Atheism Cannot Build The Bridge India Needs

This attitude of irreligion is seen in very many educated Indians of today. A member of the 1931 Commission on Higher Christian Education stated in a public speech made during the tour that two Principals of the most important Hindu and Muslim Colleges in India had told him that religion was disappearing from the minds of Indian young men. The speaker's comment was to the effect that even if atheism could smash religion, it could not build a bridge over the chasms between races countries and groups of people, the bridge which India so gravely needs. In *The National Christian Council Review* for March that year the Rev William Paton stated — All observers record the turning away from religion on the part of much of the educated younger generation. It seems to me to be marked among the definitely younger school of national leaders in India. One must be careful not to exaggerate, but evidence steadily accumulates with regard to the growing irreligion of the younger educated classes, and I am constantly told that those who keep to the old *dharma* are often not so keen, and not so prominent in the harder social tasks, as those who have cut loose from the old ways or at least treat them casually. In a lecture to students at Calcutta, about the same time as the above happenings a member of the Oxford Mission declared — I am sure that your spiritual attitude to life is one of the most precious gifts you have inherited. Do

not throw it away. In your struggle for political freedom today, you must find your soul, you must not lose it. But today Young India is impatient with all religion ' In a sermon on the first Sunday of that year at the Bombay Prārthanā Samāḡ the late Mr. Trivedī said 'Today religion is at a discount. The weary and troubled resort to houses of merriment and pleasure to drown their worries. Persons of power and position having wealth and comfort take to an easy life, giving no thought to things divine ' And *The Indian Messenger* of February 1, 1931 stated 'Forces antagonistic to religion are very strong today all over the world. The flood of atheism, agnosticism and apathy towards all religions is spreading.' But if the much-needed 'bridge' is to be built 'over the chasms between races and groups of people,' is it not clear that 'it is the fundamental belief in God which needs preserving?' Sheer patriotism alone should unite us all in this task, for in face of the need of nation-building in India we need to remember what Gāndhījī has said 'No great enterprise can ever succeed without the backing of deep religion ' Or as Sir Oliver Lodge affirms 'Atheism is so absurd that I do not know how to put it into words,' while the great English preacher, Dr. Alexander Maclaren, once observed that there seem to be some people who would rather believe in the ridiculous than in the supernatural. But as a great Quaker has remarked: 'Democracy and Religion must march together if they are to get anywhere,' for 'the God of the democrat is the God of mystical experience.'

## 6 Moral Re-Armament Movement And Indian Atheism

This movement held an inspiring series of meetings in Lahore from October 5 to 10, 1940. Sir Sikander Hyāt Khān, the Premier of the Punjab, has more than a passing interest in M. R. A. He sees in this movement possibilities for the thousands of Punjab students to find a constructive basis for living and a reality in God, at present they are drifting into

atheism. The only remedy declared Sir Sikander at one of these meetings, lies in placing religion on its high pedestal once again. Referring to the Moral Re-Armament Movement he said, I am convinced that this is the only Movement which will save both the old and new worlds from a catastrophe. This was in Lāhore, and in Calcutta a well known writer in the Brāhmo Samāj *Indian Messenger* of December 15 1940 stated Our children practically do not care for any worship, and the struggle for existence being keener than it was for us, they are trying to eliminate religion and worship altogether from the sphere of their activities. The surrounding atmosphere of the country no doubt, is partly responsible for it, yet it must be admitted that the reformers who gave up all traditions and *Shāstras* and could only rely on their inborn and inherited tendencies are surprised at seeing the nihilistic attitude of their successors. The Protestant reforms also similarly led to so much freedom of thought that the phrase "free-thinker" in the 18th century came to mean not only a denier of Christianity but an atheist. But people of this class are an honoured section who, for their ethical life and altruistic activities, are in many cases better men than orthodox [Hindu] believers. As education in higher truths of human nature will spread, this class will grow in number and a time may come when all well educated persons will belong to no sect or creed. One may outgrow creeds and dogmas, but perhaps it is better and safer to begin with dogmas or creeds. Most young people among us having neither dogmas nor the power of thinking for themselves and of relying on the inner authority are growing absolutely different to religion.

## 7 False Religion Masquerading As True

We do not wish to be understood as advocating the view that whenever any Indian thinker or politician declares religion to be a mere opiate or whenever a hostile attitude is taken up by him to religion we are to label such a one as an atheist

or agnostic or rationalist or whatever other label may be preferred. For no one can observe India's religious tendencies today without realizing that much of the current 'insurrection against religion' in India is due to a healthy reaction against those perversions of religion that have been rampant in India. For every protest against 'religion *so-called*' we should thank God, since it may only be a living protest against false religion masquerading as the real thing. As it appears in India, therefore, secularism often represents the rebellion of men of thought and conscience against the incongruities, the injustices and even the uncleannesses that are prevalent. In matters of moral rectitude, social and political reform, and real friendliness to the programme for Indian uplift, many educated men and women in India who go by the name of secularists are often more deserving of sympathy and co-operation than many who pose as belonging to the orthodox religious groups. As we ourselves read the situation in India today, there are few more encouraging signs of the times than the growing revolt of educated men and women in India against such practices as have been perpetrated in the name of religion, but which have been a drag on the wheel of India's progress. Let us therefore recognize our responsibility for helping all those who are making their noble protest against religious hypocrisy or who have risen in 'rebellion against unworthy and degrading views of God'. The growing disgust with imperfect religion is one of India's growing pains and is to be heartily welcomed. This growing disgust expressed itself in a resolution of the Self-Respect Conference held a few years ago in South India, when the President said it was unfortunate that in India the organized forces of religion had always been against social reform. The resolution expressing the opinion of the Conference was in these words — 'That customs and practices which had come into vogue in the name of religion had stunted their growth to full manhood, and that all such religions must disappear, that without the disappearance of religion there could not exist any

sense of brotherhood, and that in order that religious differences and quarrels might cease, all Indians should lay aside all feelings of religion. Concerning the attitude of anti religion seen in that resolution we identify ourselves with the able Indian editor of the *Madras Guardian* who observed at the time

While we sympathize deeply with the desire of the Self Respect Conference to get rid of superstitions and bigotry and all bondage to priestly control, we do not believe that they are doing wisely in trying to banish religion itself from the minds of youth. Religion alone can give the motive-power and the ideas which are necessary for a persistent and steady campaign of social reform. Few writers in history have expressed themselves more vigorously than did Tukārām about all forms of religious unreality. Here is one of his verses translated by Dr Macnicol thus

Ah he speaks the words of heaven  
With a heart to murder given—  
Loudly praise to God he sings,  
But his soul to lucre clings—  
Tukā says—A wretch so base—  
Smite him slap him on the face !

## 8 Dnyāneshwar And The Poet Saints An Antidote To Irreligion And Atheism

How would Dnyāneshwar show us the road to a recovery of the sense of God ? *First*, he would remind us of the *insensate folly of ignoring God*. Dnyāneshwar and the other Poet Saints are among those whose passion for God gives them special claim on our attention in these days of growing secularism. Mahipati, the 18th century biographer of Dnyāneshwar and Tukārām in his *Bhakta Līlāmṛit* has put on the lips of Tukārām a mother Kanakāī a beautiful cradle song that points out a sure remedy for the growing irreligion and agnosticism of our time, viz. the remedy of home-religion and parental piety. For the birth of Tukārām, his mother Kanakāī had gone to a



lonely temple, and twelve days after Tukārām's birth, Kanakāī asked that he be named. Into her mouth the following beautiful 'cradle song' is placed by Mahīpati. 'Where the Eternal, the Undeveloped, the Void of name and form rejoices, sleep there, O child of mine! Where "I am I" and "I am he" are heard no more, where monism and dualism are each half true, sleep there, O child of mine! Where Knower, Knowledge and Known cease to exist, sleep there, O child of mine! On the place where the saints declare knowledge to be perfect knowledge, the place where desire is not, in the home where delight is the soul's own delight, setting *there* your heart, sleep there, O child of mine.' To the present writer that is one of the beautiful passages in the world's literature. Only when the educational methods of our day find a definite place for the influence of the divine and unseen in the home-life of every child, shall we overcome the insidious influences of growing irreligion the world over. Since the educational system in vogue in India is neutral on religion, and since it may continue to be neutral, it is all the more incumbent on us to see that a true religious example and training are found in every home. A Hebrew Psalmist points out that it is 'the fool who hath said in his heart, There is no God.' Many hold the real meaning of this verse is not that 'the fool' *really believes* that God does not exist, but that the fool keeps saying this to himself, to allay his fears, while he goes on trying to *forget* God. As the Calcutta *Epiphany* pointed out some time ago 'The atheist is as a rule the person who finds it convenient not to believe in a God, and very seldom is he the person who has really "explored Eternity and found it empty" '.

*Secondly*, Dnyāneshwar and his successors would fully agree with the Christian Bible that '*there is no coercive proof of the existence of God*'. For this we should thank God, since it leaves the door open for the right kind of proof. God

does not force Himself on any of us. 'There is nothing coercive about anything we value, about the sense of beauty or colour or music for instance. If we want a sense of music we go to a musician. If we want a sense of God we go to a saint.

Therefore, *thirdly* while we find nowhere in Dnyāneshwar's poems any formal proof of the existence of God, nevertheless he discerns God's work in the saints whenever he meets them: hence Dnyāneshwar's historic contribution to Marāṭhā bhakti religion by founding the Wārkanī Panth or sect (see p. 298). This need of Saints and their company is still a real one, for these are days when 'God intoxicated' men are all too rare in any country and the tide of secularism is by no means limited to India. It is sweeping the world over and if we here confine our attention to India it is because the particular responsibility of both the writer and his readers is chiefly for India. In his book on *Prophets Of The New India* Romain Rolland points out that many of India's ablest minds have sought to erect against modern evils what he calls 'the impenetrable barrier of theism in India, and never was there greater need for this theistic barrier all over India. Some time before his lamented death C. F. Andrews quoted the words of one of the most thoughtful and experienced of the Cambridge Brotherhood at Delhi who said 'If I had my life in India to live over again and start afresh I should seek to bind together those who truly believe in God and who wish to live according to the dictates of conscience. For the forces of materialism are so strong today that it is the fundamental belief in God which needs preserving. Speaking in Ahmedabād some years ago, Gāndhijī said 'I am inundated with letters from young men who write frankly about their evil habits and about the void that their unbelief has made in their lives.

But *fourthly* Dnyāneshwar and the Poet Saints of Mahārāshtra would all emphasize for us the *absolute neces-*



of attaining Many in India are being driven to patriotism in the place of religion by despair and disappointment at the evil customs sanctioned in the name of religion falsely so called Hence their consecration to patriotism in place of religion.

## 9 The Best Philosophy For India Not Theoretic But Practical

By way of contrast to the barren results of an atheistical philosophy the increasing religious tolerance and growing cosmopolitan temper which characterize India's thousands of students offer a wonderful challenge to all who would be constructive in their presentation of religion For this purpose we need to get away from that outline of Indian philosophy which concentrates on the three great stages of pre logical (which coincides with the pre-Christian era) logical up to the Mahomedan domination of India (about A. D. 1000 or 1100) and ultra logical (from A. D. 1100 to about A. D. 1700) Rather let us emphasize that the worthiest Indian philosophy as seen in the life and character of its noblest exponents is that which is beautifully expressed by Dr S. N. Das Gupta who in *The Legacy of India* (edited by G. T. Garratt) shows that the worthiest Indian conception of the bearing of philosophy to life is that philosophy should not remain a merely theoretic science but should mould our entire personality should drive us through the hard struggles of moral and spiritual strife, make us share the common duties of social life in a perfected form, and bind us with ties of sympathy and love to all humanity The true end and final wisdom of Indian thought could not have received nobler expression than in those words of Professor Das Gupta.

## 10 A Modern Dnyāneshwar Student's Example

A recent Indian biography gives us a conspicuous illustration of how influential a man can be when he steers clear of

the modern heresies about God and when he acknowledges God in his daily life. We refer to the magnificent Marāthī volume of 537 pages telling the life-story of the late Sir Nārāyan G. Chandāvarkar. We wish some Indian benefactor would present a copy of that splendid book to every Marāthī-speaking student in the colleges of Western India. It is written in the beautiful Marāthī every one expects from the pen of the late Mr. D. G. Vaidya, the competent editor for so many years of the bilingual *Subodha Patrikā* of Bombay. It is one of the most stimulating of books and it fills us with hope concerning the future of India. Truly the crown of all true and enduring philosophy was seen in the selfless service for others and in the fearless advocacy of social reform that characterized the late Sir Nārāyan Chandāvarkar. On one occasion Sir Nārāyan said. 'In ancient India there was no lack of intellectual growth and philosophical thought, but our philosophers and thinkers soared so high in the regions of speculation that they forgot the world, detached themselves from it, professed contempt for it and dwelt in the region of theory. . Give me half a dozen men of sterling virtue, of a sensitive conscience and courageous convictions, and I can tell you the fortunes of the community amidst which they live' Nor was this very practical Indian philosopher ever ashamed to confess openly that he bathed all his philosophical principles and his daily problems in the atmosphere of prayer. Mr. Vaidya's book is full of evidence of the strength and fortitude and fearlessness that Sir Nārāyan Chandāvarkar derived from his conscientious prayer-life. We could wish for nothing better for the college students of to-day than for a collection of Sir Nārāyan's observations on prayer, and the records of his prayer-habit, to be placed side by side with a similar collection of his powerful diatribes concerning caste and wrongs against India's women. When he had been selected by Government for the office of High Court Judge he said, 'My praying heart did go up to God.' To what good purpose he prayed is seen in the

following When you think of Social Reform you have to face a Hīmālaya of superstition, corruption and bigotry, the removal of which can only be effected by labour that cannot be painless. Am I to be told when society sacrifices child widows while permitting old men to marry when caste tyrannizes and breeds jealousies, when society conspires to make slaves of its members in the name of religion and custom, that I am to sit silent or say soft things, lest, by protesting against the evils, I displease and give pain? Do you think it speaks well of the loving capacity the humane heart of a people who doom an innocent girl to lifelong widowhood while they allow an old man with one foot in the grave to marry as often as he likes? Sir Narayan always insisted on a personal life of purity as the keynote of the Social Reform Movement. They may laugh at you, but enthusiasm does not fail sooner or later to assert itself.. The only way to regenerate the country is to regenerate its heart to purify it by means of God humanity and religion. As for himself his regular practice was I examine myself daily before my God and repent and a few years before Sir Narayan passed away on May 14 1923 he wrote a letter to his friend the Marathi Christian poet N V Tilak, in which he spoke of *the elevating atmosphere of the New Testament* which has been my best reading and study the first thing when I rise at 4-30 every morning

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## CHAPTER XXIV

### ARE ALL RELIGIONS EQUALLY TRUE ABOUT GOD?

#### 1. The Indifference Of Pantheism

If one of India's chief dangers arises, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, from the denial of God seen in certain Hindu books and witnessed increasingly in present-day Indian journalism and literature, a still more subtle danger arises from the position at the opposite extreme, viz, the pantheistic position that God is everything and that everything is God. And since we have seen that Dnyāneshwar was a thorough-going Pantheist (as shown in chapter xv), we can never afford to forget this fact in applying his teaching to the present day. If secularism and the Hindu *Vedāntic* philosophy are 'natural allies' as we have sought to show (see sections 1-4 in chapter xxiii), this other of India's subtle dangers leads to the pantheistic view that there is no real difference between the various religions. As the 1931 College Commission Report stated 'A half-way house to the bold affirmation that all religions are equally false is the assertion that all religions are equally true. That is a saying that is very frequently on the lips of the educated Hindu. An extreme example of this attitude is the statement of a Bengali student that he prayed daily to Buddha, Krishna, Christ, Kālī, Mohammed, and Socrates. It is easy, no doubt, for a pantheistic religion to indulge its fancy in this fashion, and it is the pantheism of the Rāmākṛishna sect that enables it to include the saints of all religions among those whom it reveres. Yet not within the Rāmākṛishna sect only but everywhere throughout India we find this spirit of easy accommodation which the pantheistic

attitude creates, blurring distinctions of truth and untruth, of right and wrong. This, which has sapped the moral strength of India through all the ages, is exercising the same enervating influence still. Its temper of acquiescence is quenching the spirit of free inquiry and lulling people into a slothful contentment with things as they are. When the claim is made that "Indian religion is utter catholicity in belief and practice," it would appear that we have here an example of the most generous religious tolerance. It may well prove, however, that this attitude is due not to tolerance but to indifference, and that it will inevitably be numbing and sterilising in its effect.

## 2 Dīnabandhu C F Andrews On Are All Religions Equal?

### (1) *A Discussion With Gāndhījī*

On April 5 1940 Dīnabandhu C F Andrews breathed his last at Calcutta, and a melancholy but very special interest thus attached itself to an article in *The Christian Century* of Chicago dated June 12, 1940 from the pen of Mr P Oomman Philip under the title *Are All Religions Equal?* In his introductory paragraph Mr Philip stated: "In December 1936 Mr C. F. Andrews, while on a visit to Gāndhījī at Wardhā, discussed among other matters Gāndhījī's contention that all religions are equal and that a man should always remain in the faith in which he was born. During his sojourn at Wardhā, Mr Andrews often travelled the 75 miles to Nāgpur to meet with some of his friends there. On one such visit he told me of the discussions he was having with Gāndhījī Abdul Gaffar Khān and others. He left with me a letter he had prepared explaining his own position, which he said would be read to Gāndhījī and others and discussed further. This statement, here presented, shows that Mr Andrews subjected Mr Gāndhī's ideas to critical examination and did not hesitate to point out what he considered unacceptable. There is



genuine sorrow among all classes of Indians over Mr Andrews' death. He richly deserved the name *Dīnabandhu* (friend of the helpless) by which Indians affectionately called him. Hindus and Muslims recognized him as "Christ's Faithful Apostle" (C. F. A.). India deeply mourns the loss of this noblehearted Englishman and great Christian." Then follows the statement C. F. Andrews had prepared to be read to Gāndhījī and others. We are indebted for the following to *The Christian Century*, and we have added paragraph headings.

(2) *Must A Man Necessarily Remain In The Faith In Which He Was Born ?*

'Your talk on religion yesterday distressed me, for its formula, "All religions are equal," did not seem to correspond with history or with my own life-experience. Also your declaration that a man should always remain in the faith in which he was born appeared to be a static conception not in accordance with such a dynamic subject as religion. Let us take the example of Cardinal Newman. Should he, because he was born in Protestant England, remain a Protestant? Or again, ought I to have remained in the very narrow sect of Irvingism? Or once more, ought I, in my later life, to have remained a rigid Anglo-Catholic, such as I was when I came out to India? You, again, have challenged Hinduism and said, "I cannot remain Hindu if untouchability is a part of it." I honour you for that true statement. Of course if conversion meant a denial of any living truth in one's own religion, then we must have nothing to do with it. But I have never taken it in that sense, but rather as the discovery of a new and glorious truth, which one had never seen before and for which one would sacrifice one's whole life. It does mean also, very often, the passing from one fellowship to another, and this should never be done lightly or in haste, but if the new fellowship embodies the glorious new truth in such a way as to make it more living and real and cogent than the old outward-

truth, then I should say to the individual, "Go forward, become a member of the new faith which will make your own life more fruitful. But let me repeat with all emphasis, this does not imply the denial of any religious truth in what went before. It does not mean, for instance, that a Christian is bound to believe that only Christians can be saved and a Hindu that only Hindus can be saved. My dearest friend, Susil Kumār Rudra, declared openly that he cherished all that was good in Hinduism and yet he was a profound Christian. This attitude of Susil's—which has now become my own—is surely in accord with the mind of Jesus Christ. We find that Christ welcomed faith (i. e. trust in God's power to save) wherever He found it. When at the beginning of His ministry His closest relatives tried to restrain Him thinking He was suffering from religious mania, He cried, "Who is My mother and who are My sisters and brothers? He that doeth the will of God, the same is My mother and My sister and My brother. This was clearly said at a moment of exalted emotion but it ruled His whole ministry.

### (3) *The Unique Way To God*

Jesus mortally offended His own village people, among whom He had lived for thirty years, by pointing out to them instances in their own scriptures (such as Nanman the Syrian and the Gentile widow of Sarepta) where God's grace had been found outside the Jewish Church. So shocked were His fellow villagers at such a heresy that they tried to kill Him. But, quite undaunted, He insisted on this fact on every possible occasion. The Samaritans were outcast by the Jews. So Jesus deliberately takes the good Samaritan for the centre of His parable and contrasts him with the priest and the Levite. When the pagan Roman centurion came to Him, "I have not found," He said with great joy "such faith no, not in Israel." To the Greek Syrophenician woman He said, "Oh lady great is thy faith. Not only are abundant examples given of

this manner of life which He pursued, but the essence of all His teaching was that God is our Father and that there are no favourites among His children. "He maketh His sun to shine and His rain to fall upon the just and upon the unjust " As far as I can see, He literally went to His crucifixion because he insisted on holding to the full this larger faith It is well also to notice His utter condemnation of those who seek at all costs to gain converts to their own religion He says sternly "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when you have done so ye make him twofold more a child of hell than yourselves." Concerning mere profession of religion without practice, He is equally scathing The phrase "whited sepulchres" has become proverbial To repeat, Christ is to me the unique way whereby I have come to God and have found God, and I cannot help telling others about it, wherever I can do so without any compulsion or undue influence Khān Sāhib Abdul Gaffār Khān equally holds that Islam is the unique way to God, and I would most gladly sit at his feet, as you and I have both done, in order to find out more and more what Islam means to him, and I would sit at your feet also to find out what Hinduism means to you. There is a generous phrase of Horace's which may almost be translated at sight. "*Maxima debetur pueris reverentia*," which means, "The greatest reverence is owed to children." Christ said the same thing when he warned us, "See that ye despise not one of these little ones " I feel every day more and more that it is this spirit of reverence that we need, reverence for all that is good, wherever it is found As far then as I can read His life, Christ deliberately broke down every barrier of race and sect and reached out to a universal basis He regarded His message as embracing the whole human race.'

#### (4) *Clear-Cut Distinctions But No Anathematizing*

'I find that Buddhism is a universal religion of a similar world-wide character. It went out from India all over the

world and I honour it for doing so. Personally I am thankful that the Rāmakrishna Mission is doing the same today and I have had true fellowship with its missionaries in America, Australia and Europe. Also I find historically that Islam was proclaimed as a universal religion and I have lived in the families of devout Muslims in different parts of the world with great happiness and shared many of their ideals. Thus I find that a universal note, beyond the boundaries of a single country is common to these living religions of mankind. Perhaps you would be surprised if I called you the greatest exponent of Hinduism today in the whole world. If a living truth is held with all the soul as you hold it, you cannot help proclaiming it. I honour Paul the apostle when he says "Necessity is laid upon me. Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel." I recognize in you the same divine necessity burning within, which makes you say in deed if not in word, "Woe is me, if I preach not that which I hold to be the gospel." But then you may answer "That means we shall always be fighting as to whose gospel is superior and this will bring with it all the evils of compassing sea and land to make one proselyte." I don't think that follows. Let us look at it in this way. I feel as a devout Christian that the message which Christ came into the world to proclaim is the most complete and most inspiring that was ever given to men. That is why I am a Christian. As you know well, I owe everything to Christ. But I most readily concede to my dear friend, the Khān Sāhib Abdul Gaffār Khan whom I love with all my heart for his goodness, exactly the same right to hold that the message of the prophet Mohammed is to him the most complete and most inspiring that was ever given to mankind. That is why he is a Muslim. Since it is to him a living truth, I fully expect him to make it known. He cannot and should not keep it to himself. And you surely have the abundant right to proclaim to all the world the living truth of

Hinduism, which you regard as the supreme religion (*parama dharma*). I do not think that the act of Christian baptism militates against the idea which I have propounded in this letter, or implies the renunciation of anything that is good in Hindu or Islamic culture. The exact phrase is that we renounce "the world, the flesh and the devil," that is to say, the essential evils of this life. I know that this would imply for a Christian the renunciation of certain things in Hinduism which you would think unobjectionable, such as idolatry, but there are Brāhmos who renounce idolatry and yet remain Hindu. I do not want to be loose or vague myself here and I feel that there are clear-cut distinctions between Christians, Hindus and Muslims which cannot today be overpassed. But I do not think we need to anathematize one another in consequence. We should rather seek always to see the best in one another, for that is an essential feature of love. There is a precious element of goodness which we can all hold in common. St Paul says "Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report . think on these things, and the God of peace shall be with you" That seems to me to be a fine way towards peace in religion, without any compromise, syncretism, or toning down of vital distinctions'

### (5) *A Plea For Toleration*

'I have written this in as objective a manner as possible, when dealing with a subject so charged with emotion as religion is to me. I look forward to the time when the noble phrase of the *Qu'ran Sharif*, "Let there be no compulsion in religion," will be true all over India and throughout the world. It is the great ideal at which all of us should aim. In Japan, I believe, and also in Ceylon, a Christian member of the family may live happily in the same house with a Buddhist without sacrificing one iota of his own faith. I wish that this could be said of other lands also, for to act thus appears to me to represent the true spirit of religious toleration.'

### 3 Neo-Hinduism All Religions Are Imperfect

#### (1) *Dr R B Mānikam On Absolutism*

Just as the modern denial of God leads to atheism and the pantheistic view of God leads to affirming all religions to be equal, so the Monistic view of God that Dnyāneshwar held (see chapter XV sections 1-4) leads to the Absolutist position that all religions are imperfect and that they are only relatively true. On June 3 1941 Dr R. B. Mānikam, Secretary of India's National Christian Council opened a discussion on Neo Hinduism on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee Session of the Bangalore Continuation Conference at Bangalore. We are indebted to the *Indian Christian Patriot* Madras, for the following account. Dr R. B. Manikam said Neo-Hinduism believes that all religions are the same, and he showed by quotations from the writings of Sir S. Rādhākṛishnan, Gāndhījī and others how widely this doctrine was being held by educated non Christians in India today. He said that in recent times however there had been a strife of emphasis instead of saying now that all religions are true, it was being maintained that all religions are imperfect and that the perfect religion was yet to be. Sir S. Rādhākṛishnan would have us believe that inasmuch as Hinduism has always tried to take in the best from other religions and inasmuch as religious mystic experience is the core of all religious experiences, Vedāntic mysticism promised to become that perfect religion of the future. Dr Mānikam examined the theoretical basis of this doctrine and said that it rested on Absolutism or Monism, and its correlative doctrine was in degrees of truth. All truth is said to be relative and partial and therefore that all the great religions of the world are only true in their degree as approximations to Absolutism.

#### (2) *Hindu Apologetic Conversion Not Needed*

He pointed out that this doctrine had served excellently as Hindu apologetic, both in explaining away the presence of

numerous Hindu sects and in showing that Hinduism is the only religion which has emphasised the supremacy of Absolutism in philosophy and of mysticism in religion. This theory makes a virtue of religious tolerance. It asserts that as the religious truth which is relative to any man is likely to be the truth relative to his country and nation, there is no need for conversion, as indigenous Indian religions are the true ones for Indians. Attention was drawn to the elements of value in this doctrine. It could not be denied that there are many truths common to all the main religions, and that these are very often more important than the dividing dogmas. It is unreasonable to believe or think that all the great non-Christian religions of the world are the work of the devil. Religious differences must not and need not degenerate into communalism.

### (3) *Has Hinduism Been Tolerant ?*

Dr Mānikam went on to adduce reasons against this doctrine. He showed that the theoretical basis of this doctrine, viz, Absolutism, could be assailed by either denying its existence or combining Absolutism with Theism. He pointed out that the inadequacy of all religious dogmas did not mean their *equal* inadequacy but proved only that religions were on different levels. Mystical union need not be the only kind of religious experience. He stressed that while Hindus were very tolerant in their religious beliefs, they were very intolerant in religious practice and *dharma*. The persecutions of *Kshatriyas* who dared to question the supremacy of the Brāhmīns, and of Christians in recent times, gave the lie to the Hindu boast of religious tolerance. Dr. Mānikam said that while the psychological subjective religious attitude might be the same in all religions, there was not even one single doctrine upon which all religions were agreed, not even the existence of God or of this world. The premises on which the teachings of religions were based differed from one another, their affirmations and denials regarding the world, God, evil, salvation and future life

had little in common. Hence he affirmed that it was idle to pretend about religious creeds being 'alternative expressions of the one truth. If they differ it is legitimate to enquire which is most true, and which represents the ultimate truth.

*(4) That All Religions Are The Same Is Neither Philosophically Tenable Nor Religiously Sound*

In concluding, Dr Mānīkam said it is untrue to say that dogmas did not matter they mattered tremendously as affecting our life and conduct. It is because totalitarian states have fervently embraced and held with fanatical fervour certain dogmas that they are so effective in influencing the conduct of their citizens. It is our own distrust of dogma and our desire to be all things to all men that are handicapping us today. Hence he held that this neo-Hindu doctrine that all religions are the same, in spite of its certain elements of value, was on the whole neither acceptable nor philosophically tenable nor religiously sound.

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## CHAPTER XXV

### THE MESSAGE ABOUT A LOVING FATHER-GOD

#### 1. What Comfort From Dnyāneshwar For Sufferers?

In an age when there is so much suffering in the world, it is of interest to note that one central problem with Dnyāneshwar six and a half centuries ago, as with every other Hindu poet, since then, was the problem of suffering. Every reader who has carefully weighed over the two translations we have given from Dnyāneshwar's message, viz., the whole of his *Haripāth* or *Call To Prayer* (see our pp. 276-285) and the last chapter of *Dnyāneshwarī* (see our pages 142-275) will have noted that underlying all Dnyāneshwar's discussions there is this problem of human suffering in one form or other. To set forth with anything like adequacy Dnyāneshwar's attitude on this age-long problem and to indicate in which direction he looked for a solution would require a volume in itself. Suffice therefore to say that the basic fact of man's self-conscious existence and all that happens therein are regarded by Dnyāneshwar, as by every other thoroughgoing Hindu, as so much of a misfortune that the Hindu mind falls back on *māyā* or illusion as the only explanation. But this must be regarded as evasion rather than explanation. For man's self-conscious suffering is too obviously concrete a fact for such a solution to satisfy either mind or heart. We shall see in our brief section below on *karma* (pp. ) how unsatisfying a solution is supplied by the *karmic* presupposition of all Hindu thought, nor can Dnyāneshwar's other two Hindu presuppositions of Pantheism and Transmigration become any more satisfying to the soul. The Pantheistic idea of God and the Transmigration theory about man are both a total denial not only of divine freedom.

but of human individuality. These two theories, which underlay and permeated the whole of Dnyāneshwar's teaching as an out-and-out Monist (as shown in our chapter xv) have only the comfortless gospel to offer of 'a renunciation of man's clamorous wants rather than their encouragement and satisfaction. They therefore rob life of the comfort arising from Providential control and take from prayer its nerve and soul. Not for ever will educated India be put off with this time-worn philosophy—for it cannot be called religion—which holds no comfort for life's lonely crises. Can't you tell me *something* which will comfort me? was the touching appeal of a Bombay Indian lady who had lost her only daughter. As sure as the stars move in their courses, India will refuse to be comforted by a philosophy which robs God of all power to help the broken-hearted or to heal the sin-stricken spirit. Pantheism, *karma* and transmigration are a poor substitute for the Living Father. They crush hope out of man's soul.

## 2. Does Dnyāneshwar's Pantheism (*Advaita*) Inspire Social Service For Our Suffering Fellow Men?

Is it likely that such a doctrine of God as Dnyāneshwar's *advaita* offers, will of itself lead to disinterested service of our fellow men? Experience in Mysore villages certainly does not suggest that it can, says an evangelistic missionary there.

In a village of the Hassan district a Brāhmin once twitted me with the inadequacy of the Gospel as a scheme of life. He maintained that he had in his *advaita* the philosophy underlying such obvious teaching as Jesus gave in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The Supreme is myself besides the Supreme is also the pariah. Things that are equal to the same thing are equal to one another. Therefore I am the pariah and no one need tell me to go and do the pariah good. A man always looks after number one. The man was logical enough, and truer to his own tenets than any modern statement of caste that reads back into that system the selfless.

service of "the least, the lowliest, the lost," which only belief in a Father-God can stir man to render to his brother.'

### 3. Antidote For The Agnostic Attitude To Suffering

For all who feel driven to take refuge in Agnosticism the doctrine that nothing is or can be known about God beyond material phenomena we recommend the great book by Dr. Cairns entitled *The Faith That Rebels*, where he says: 'The malady of our time lies in its contracted thoughts of God. We think too narrowly and meanly of God's power, of God's love, and of God's freedom to help men.' Dr. Cairns re-examines the miracles of social reform performed by Jesus and he states. 'If disease and death fled away before Jesus as the Bible says they did, if the storm fell silent at His word; if He was able to dominate the powers of hunger; and if, finally, He broke the bands of death itself, then we have a supreme confirmation of faith in the spiritual character of the universe and in that vast process of creation whereby God is making and disciplining human personalities.' Let us therefore go on offering to India the sure antidote for its growing materialism and agnosticism in the message concerning a Living, Loving Father-God. But at this very hour in human history, are we not face to face with a disorder almost cosmic in character which would appear to make impossible for many people such a faith in a Loving, Living, Supreme Father of all? Faced with such a barrier to faith, what shall be said?

### 4. 'What On Earth Is God Doing?'

While society is confronted by a terrible catastrophe such as the present world situation, a recent writer in *The Christian Century* expresses the prevailing perplexity thus 'One question keeps coming up to pester and plague religious faith with an incorrigible persistency. With everything seeming to go to pieces, what on earth is God doing? Where is He?' He answers his question as follows: 'God

is here now sustaining the moral order of the universe, working out the law of the harvest on earth 'as it is in heaven' keeping faith with Himself and His law-abiding cosmic order "Be sure your sin will find you out. God is not mocked as ye sow so shall ye also reap. And now again our sins have found us out, despite the fact that in many instances *they* have not been found out. Who of us is without fault? We are *all* guilty, some more, perhaps some less. And the day of reckoning is upon us. The stars in their courses fight against all of us. The ten commandments we discover are never broken they are only illustrated. We are getting what we prepared for. We filled the conditions of disaster and the results are unfailing. God is here, certainly enough and in a more awful sense than we ever suspected we may sing

    Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord  
    He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of  
        wrath are stored,  
    He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible  
        swift sword  
    His truth is marching on!

Thus, though many things we have cherished are going to pieces, there is no ultimate disorder! Chaos is upon us, to be sure, in retribution but that is because justice reigns. Woe and tragedy are all about, because of the inevitable outworking of the law of righteousness which is as inexorable in the spiritual realm as the law of gravitation in the physical. Had all the wickedness of this wilful world brought forth peace and prosperity here on this earth then certainly we could have said that there is no God. But not now. That we cannot sin with impunity that righteousness still rules is evidence enough that God is here, now sustaining the moral order of the universe (*The Christian Century* pp. 762-3 June 12 1940) That we do not find in Dnyāneshwar such a clear and

dynamic connection between the righteousness of God and the sufferings attendant on the sin of man, apart indeed from the disappointing doctrines of *Karma* (on which see below), must be accounted one of the grave deficiencies of Dnyāneshwar's permanent message to India.

## 5. Suffering And The Law Of 'Karma'

One of Dnyāneshwar's basic ideas is the Hindu doctrine of *Karma*, so closely bound up with all his other ideas of God, some lofty, some not quite so lofty. Hindus and Buddhists alike for centuries past have wrestled with the problem of suffering. One who in deep sympathy with all oriental aspirations has toiled for over 30 years in these Eastern realms has stated, 'According to the theory of *Karma*, not only must all wrong-doing be punished to the uttermost (and, of course, all well-doing rewarded to the uttermost), but the whole of the punishment must be endured by the wrong-doer himself, no man can share it with him, and there is no being, human or divine, who can save him from any part of his suffering. The possibility of vicarious suffering is ruled out. According to the Hindu theory of *Karma* and Transmigration, the soul, the real man, passes from existence to existence, bearing always with him his *karma*, the good and evil consequences of his deeds, unless, indeed, through retributive sufferings, meritorious deeds, and above all through knowledge, it attains unto absorption into the Supreme, the *Brahman-Ātman*, God. Can we wonder that as men meditated upon this doctrine, as they concentrated their thoughts upon it, they declared all existence to be evil and misery? If a man knows the *Ātman*, "that I am I," he is not bound by transmigration or *karma*. In his new knowledge he stands emancipated for ever, free from the fetters of *karma* whether of past or future actions. This conception of "identification of self with the *Ātman*" is a very sublime conception, the topmost pinnacle of the temple of Indian speculative thought. But it is not a moral conception.'

## 6 India's Need Of Religious Assurance

Since the doctrine of *karma* is part of the innermost kernel of Dnyāneshwar's teaching we need ever to remember that where *karma* is allowed a place there can be no real assurance of salvation for the soul. Dr A. G. Hogg, who recently retired from the Madras Christian College, has an admirable book of 102 pages on the subject of *karma And Redemption* obtainable at the C. L. S. Madras for twelve annas. Though it was first published over thirty years ago it still makes a definite contribution on the subject indicated in the sub-title, *The Interpretation of Hinduism and Re-statement of Christianity*. Dr Hogg's standpoint is indicated in the two following excerpts. In his Preface Dr Hogg observes:

The secret spring of real living religion anywhere can be nothing but a simplicity of assurance that the supreme religious Reality is humanly satisfying or in the words of the Christian apostle that 'God is light and in Him is no darkness at all'. *Nothing but* such an assurance, has he said? Why such an assurance is just everything. It is the joy of life. It vanquishes death. The message from the living heart of religion that God is light and in Him is nothing of the dark. No message less tremendous than this seems worth erecting into a religion. No faith less glorious than this is big enough to live upon. It is because Dr Hogg's book helps in this all important question of providing a basis of spiritual assurance for India's doubting minds that he has given so valuable a message.

## 7 Deficiencies Of Hindu Karma

In light of India's tragic religious history and its haunting feeling of life's weariness and of the unjustifiableness of unmerited suffering Dr Hogg expresses the view that it would have been of incalculable benefit to India if she could have modified her unbending idea of *Karma* and if she could have surrendered her belief in 'terrestrial re-

incarnations.' But 'the persistence of the theory of *Karma* and transmigration is a great tribute to the power of ideas.' Nevertheless, 'along with so much that commands respect there are what must seem to the Christian to be serious deficiencies' The basic elements in the law of *Karma* are that 'every man's peculiar lot is the fruit of his conduct in a previous *unremembered* soul-embodiment,' and that there is an exact proportion 'between the extent of a man's previous merit or demerit and the pleasantness or unpleasantness of the fruit he has to consume.' Moreover 'emphasis is laid on the idea of *destiny* in a way calculated to crush the indispensable individualistic qualities of personal aspiration and enterprise' The natural result of such a philosophy is seen in India's fatalistic temper of mind and in the pessimistic mood that marks so much of its religious literature Concerning India's literature Dr. Hogg makes the interesting observation 'One cannot think of the religious use which the Hindu mind has made of the semi-legendary material of the *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata* without suspecting that a very important reason why the historical element is not still more fundamental in Hindu religion is simply the absence from Indian history of a sufficiently tragic and universally inspiring figure' He further makes the suggestive remark that if the Indian poet has been able to extract such moving pathos as he has done from strange and grotesque myths, 'what might he not have accomplished had he known of an Indian patriot with sorrows as profound as those of Jesus?'

## 8. Unmerited Suffering Illuminated

Dr. Hogg pays India the noble tribute that 'no country in the whole world has shown itself more able than India to condemn the joys and sorrows of ordinary life' and all who have been impressed by India's awe-inspiring capacity for suffering will agree with the tribute Nevertheless it is profoundly 'surprising that the higher thought of India should

have so long acquiesced in so imperfect a doctrine as *karma* for it supplies only an *apparent* solution and behind its gigantic hypothesis lies the *fear* of having to admit that the supreme Being has distributed with anything but perfect equality the joys and sorrows which from other standpoints a grandly ascetic India regards as worthless. But such a fear is surely based on a view of life's suffering which is lacking both in insight and in courage. And from the Cross of Jesus there comes the illuminating and soul-sustaining message that, so far from unmerited suffering being regarded as a moral outrage, it has been the grand prerogative of God, and of God alone, to suffer absolutely without having deserved to to suffer and that the divinest privilege to which a man can attain is to be permitted to suffer evils which another has deserved more directly than himself. Thus one valuable part of the message coming from the Cross of the sinless Saviour is that unmerited suffering is not an outrage or an injustice, but on the contrary a privilege and an honour. Such a truth is surely far more sustaining and illuminating than the Karmic principle.

## 9 The Karmic Law And The Law Of Salvation

It is in line with this whole point of view that Dr Hogg in his closing pages shows how the effort to convert sinfulness into goodness requires the putting forth of all the potentialities of such a perfectly moral nature as we see in Jesus Christ. Then come these enriching words on the whole problem of redemption — It follows that if God is freely and fully to express Himself the universal order must have at least two inviolable laws or principles. It must have the *Karmic* law the law that if sin enters the phenomenal system, penalty must enter too. It must also have the law of salvation the law that if sin enters the phenomenal system, God shall be compelled—with reverence be it spoken—by all the moral forces of His nature to throw the whole infinitude of His being



into the phenomenal system, that is, to incarnate Himself in order to abolish sinfulness. God cannot express Himself fully in the punishment of sin, He can express Himself fully only if with the punishment goes a total forth-putting of His nature in an effort to destroy sinfulness. Christ is enabled to regenerate through the opportunity of revealing His love afforded by His life of patience and sorrow, so full of the *Karmic* penalties of the world's sin. But His work signifies more than this. The Incarnation of God was the product of a moral necessity of the divine nature to react against sin to the extent of a complete forth-putting of itself in the effort to generate human goodness afresh. If God had not incarnated Himself in Christ the grand gospel would not have been, for God would not have been the God He is. And if Christ had not endured the *Karmic* lot of man with divine faithfulness even unto death, then also the grand gospel would not have been, for there would have been no infinite power of regeneration.'

## 10 The Suffering God

The writer in *The Christian Century* from whom we quoted above goes on to say 'All this' (about God sustaining the moral order of the universe) 'is but one aspect of the matter. Consider a second fact of momentous significance. God is here, now, suffering. How can it be that the Infinite could know anguish over the suffering of mere humans? But a greater mystery than that confronts us in the central contention of our Christian creed, namely. How can it be that the Infinite could wrap Himself in human flesh, come down to this sad, mad earth and dwell among men, sharing their struggles, sufferings and sins? And all this that He might teach them to transform their tragedies into triumphs, and, through His own anguish and apparent defeat, release the redemptive force that must one day save the world. The crucifixion of Christ was the eternal symbol of an enduring fact, that the innocent

suffer with the guilty, that the Infinite shares the anguish of the finite. Studdert Kennedy says it most succinctly in his unforgettable poem "The Suffering God"

How can it be that God can reign in glory  
Calmly content with what His love has done,  
Reading unmoved the piteous shameful story  
All the vile deeds men do beneath the sun?

Are there no tears in the heart of the Eternal?  
Is there no pain to pierce the soul of God?  
Then must He be a fiend of Hell infernal  
Beating the earth to pieces with His rod.

Father if He, the Christ, were Thy Revealer,  
Truly the First Begotten of the Lord,  
Then must *Thou* be a Sufferer and a Healer  
Pierced to the heart by the sorrow of the sword

Then must it mean not only that Thy sorrow  
Smote Thee that once upon the lonely tree  
But that today tonight, and on the morrow  
Still it will come, O Gallant God, to Thee!

(*The Christian Century* p 763 June 12 1940)

## 11 The Philosophy Of Jesus About Pain

Contrast the comfortless gospel of *Māyā* Transmigration and Pantheism with the message of Him Who said I have come that they may have life and have it to the full (St. John 10 10) and of His servant St. Paul who said, We are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us (Romans 8.37) and 'in Him Who keeps on strengthening me I am able for anything (Philippians 4 13) When we are in danger of being swept off our feet by the dark tragedy of war and its ghastly suffering let us remember that even this war factor has been taken into consideration by Jesus Christ who says to us still When you hear of wars and rumours

of wars, do not be alarmed; these have to come;....but he will be saved who holds out to the very end' (St. Mark 13:7,13). In his *Guide To Understanding The Bible*, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick points out, 'Jesus is never represented as saying, "I have explained the world," but He is reported to have said, "I have overcome the world" (St. John 16:33)', and Dr. Fosdick continues. 'The bestowal of interior power thus to rise above trouble and carry off a victory in spite of it seemed to the early Christians a supremely vital function of religion, and this power they found through their faith in, an experience with, an avaiably present Spirit. Far from being driven away from God by unexplained suffering, therefore, they were driven to Him.' And again: 'The characteristic mood of the New Testament in dealing with suffering' is not mainly to vindicate God's justice or His methods, but 'a singing assurance of present victory in the spirit, with all future triumphs presaged in immediate experience, and the result a positive jubilance in the face of even extreme disaster.'

## 12. Trouble And Triumph In The New Testament

'The New Testament is full of trouble,' continues Dr. Fosdick. 'It begins with a massacre of innocent children, it is centred in the crucifixion, it ends with a vision in which the souls of the martyred saints under the altar cry, "How long, O Master?"'. In consequence, while the New Testament is supremely a book of hardship and tragedy, it is far and away, the most exultant and jubilant book in the literature of religion.' The dynamical value of the New Testament arises from the fact that while other religious books, including most Old Testament books, regard suffering as either punitive or educative or as something entirely inexplicable and mysterious, in the New Testament which gives the actual experience of followers of Jesus the power of self-sacrifice brings about a result that is revolutionary. 'At the centre of the first Church's

experience was a momentous tragedy—innocence outraged, wisdom overthrown by ignorance and bigotry a supreme soul done to death by the hatred of little men and the ruthlessness of an inhuman government. Yet 'there issued from this tragedy a radiant and confident faith in God. Instead of faith meeting defeat it achieved victory the tragic Cross proved to be so saving a force that it redeemed tragedy itself. The possible uses of suffering were so far exalted that suffering itself was so clearly seen to be an integral part of the universe, not an alien intruder in it, that God Himself was portrayed as the eternal Sufferer. That was one of the deepest meanings of Calvary viz. that 'suffering sacrificially assumed for the sake of saving and serving others has in the New Testament become an attribute of the divine nature itself. Hence we find that whereas other religious classics, such as our own Dhyān eshwar are thoughtful and submissive in the face of sorrow the New Testament is not only thoughtful and submissive, but victorious and even militant, so that sorrow and evil are viewed not as facts mainly to be explained but as forces to be conquered and transmuted into instruments of power. Whereas religion in its infant stage, both past and present, regards itself (religion) as in large measure a means of escaping trouble, the people who have attained to the New Testament experience know the practice of religion to be a sure means of getting into trouble, but it is trouble that is regenerative in value for themselves and revolutionary for the society of which they form a part.

### 13 The Wonderful Alchemy Of Christian Faith

Hence the wonderful alchemy whereby in the words of Dr H G Wood, the new Professor of Theology in the Birmingham University bombed in his own home in the centre of England, could write in a letter to *The American Friend* of Feb. 13 1941 Adverse conditions strengthen spiritual convictions and spiritual ties. God's Kingdom is the only one

that can endure, and no social order is tolerable unless it is based on respect for the integrity of the personality of each human being and belief in one's possibility of service.' In the same issue of *The American Friend*, after reporting air-raids over her Woodbrooke home, resulting in 'half our nights in the cellars,' with a 'house almost completely demolished,' and with 'our evening hymn and our silence as in the catacombs. Mrs. Leyton Richard could write: 'Eternity is a manner of living, not length of days. Our sense of values is getting adjusted nearer to reality. Hatred is abroad in the earth, but to offset it, love is heightened and deepened. Never did family affection mean so much, nor the love of friends, never did houses and lands and material possessions mean so little.'

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## CHAPTER XXVI

### WHERE DNYĀNESHWAR'S TEACHING FINDS ITS CROWN

#### 1 Dnyāneshwar A Bridge To Something Higher

This book will have been written in vain if its readers fail to realize at least something of the loftiness and grandeur of Dnyaneshwar's teaching. His image of a well of nectar to describe the knowledge of the divine, which again is a beautiful wish jewel that has happened to come man's way (see the entire section on Dnyaneshwar as the Intellectual Mystic in Part Three, Chapter x, Section 3, pp. 136-141). These and many other inimitable similes serve to show that in the knowledge of God, man has reached what *Dnyaneshwar considers the pinnacle of human achievement*. This means we have to look elsewhere for the crown and consummation of Dnyāneshwar's teaching on God and on man's relation to God. I am come not to destroy but to fulfil said Jesus and though the fulfilment of which the Man of Nazareth spoke, referred in the first instance to the teachers of His own nation the Jews, history is all the time making abundantly clear that Jesus is the crown and fulfilment of the best and divinest teachings and aspirations of every race. Hence it is in the teaching of Jesus that we shall find the loftiest in Dnyaneshwar taken to a loftier summit still. The aim of this book is far from instituting a comparison between Dnyāneshwar and Jesus and their respective teachings in the same way that Dr Prabhakarrāo R. Bhandarkar in the year 1903 compared Jesus and Tukārām (see our *Life And Teaching Of Tukārām* pp. 239-246). Yet there are deeply interesting resemblances. In the best sense of the word both Jesus and Dnyāneshwar separated though they were by nearly

thirteen centuries, were both dreamers of a better day for the world in which they lived. These two dreamers at Ālandī in India and at Nazareth in Palestine were strikingly alike in their collisions with contemporary religious leaders and in their conquest of the hearts of the two peoples. Concerning the Ālandī dreamer this comes out very clearly in the Prabhāt Film, for the Ālandī which persecuted Dnyāneshwar so cruelly now rejoices in the fame he has given to this place where he had to endure so much. And concerning the despised Nazarene it is now axiomatic that 'men have taken Jesus down from the Cross to put Him upon a throne,' and, most remarkable of all, 'the true symbol of His kingship is His Cross' Indeed, our study of the dreamer at Ālandī and of his sufferings leads us to the conclusion that could he have known about the Dreamer at Nazareth and about His Cross his heart would have leapt for joy at the possibility of becoming His disciple.

## 2 Two 'Gurus' Who Both Died Young

On another point the resemblance is striking. For both Dnyāneshwar and Jesus died young, the former according to tradition at 22, and the latter according to the popular view at 33. The second line in Gāndhījī's favourite Christian hymn, as Dr. Isaac Watts actually wrote it, emphasizes the *youth* of Jesus; though modern versions have modified the line and so have robbed the hymn of one of its distinctive features. What Dr. Watts wrote was

' When I survey the wondrous Cross  
Where the young Prince of Glory died.'

Now just before 'the young Prince of Glory died' He declared what He Himself regarded as His crowning achievement. A study of what was regarded as their crowning achievements by both these *Gurus* would be instructive if followed out in detail, for if the sufferings and poetical power of Dnyāneshwar have made him the *Guru* of Mahārāshtra, the sufferings and saving power of Jesus have made Him 'the *Guru* of the World.'

What Dnyāneshwar regarded as *his* crowning achievement is shown in such verses of the last chapter in his greatest poem as verses 27, 1741 and above all his dedicatory prayer in 1793-1801 (see pp. 144 269 and 273-4 of this book) Similarly whenever we desire to assess the actual achievement in the Life and Work of Jesus, we get special help in this high task from Jesus Himself. After He had given His farewell message to His little band of disciples, Jesus then did for them the only thing He now could do, He prayed and died for them. In His closing prayer He said O Righteous Father the world has not known Thee but I have known Thee, and these (My disciples) have known that Thou hast sent Me so I have revealed and interpreted Thy Name to them (St John xvii 25-26) Jesus here sums up His Life's work by saying that He had made God known in His Righteousness and in His Love.

The Father's *righteousness* must repel sin; it cannot ignore it. Yet it is a *Father's* righteousness which delivers men from all their creeping dreads, from all their stinging fears, from all the paralysing uncertainties which have shut out the divine face. It is of more than passing interest that in both these aspects of truth God's Fatherhood and man's sense of sinfulness, the *Guru* of Ālandī was deficient (see pp. ) And I will declare it said Jesus within a few hours of the Cross. There, as never before, did he reveal God as Father. Father forgive them. The early death of Jesus was not to put a stop to His revelation of God. Hanging on the Cross in weakness, is a strange Revealer of the omnipotent God. As St. Paul expressed it

God proves His love for us by this, that Christ died for us when we were still sinners (Romans 5 8) And even beyond the grave, Jesus went on revealing the Father's Love and Power in the transfiguring grace resulting from His indwelling Spirit. This means we can each have Jesus Christ Himself by His Spirit as Guest in our hearts. hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3 3) which were the very words on which the present writer found Nāmāyan Vāman Tilak



feasting his soul on the last day of his conscious life as he lay in the Bombay Hospital in May 1919. 'In this orphaned world modern thought will make short work of all other sources of certitude about the character of God, and will leave men alone in Christ as the sole surviving source of certitude as to whether there is a God and what sort of a God He is.'

### 3. The Secret of Certitude

It is in this certitude that we find 'what is lacking' in the lofty and austere message of Dnyāneshwar, and we feel instinctively that had Dnyāneshwar ever heard of such a message his noble soul would have thrilled with joy in whole-hearted acceptance. It is also in this deep certitude that such intense pilgrims of eternity as Gāndhījī would find abiding satisfaction to their soul's long quest. For Gāndhījī has more than once made clear that he feels he has not yet met the *guru* for his soul. As he said on another occasion, 'Miracles may not be expected, and it may take ages' In the closing days of 1940 there was published in India the heartrending confession of another of India's very greatest sons Writing in *The Indian Review* the Right Honourable Srinivāsa Sāstrī made a confession that must have moved to the very depths every one who read it. Mr. Sāstrī's early years were spent under the influence of strict Brāhmin orthodoxy and in his later years he has proved himself one of the finest orators and statesmen of the British Commonwealth of Nations, his speeches having entranced people all over the world Listening to his oratory none can have suspected the inward struggle he has depicted, evidently at much cost to himself. 'All my life I have with maidenly shrinking avoided self-exposure.' Mr Sāstrī speaks in moving language of being a 'specimen of the early products of English education. I lost faith in the accustomed rituals and ceremonies. Religious thought, however, was sustained by an indefeasible longing for salvation. The personality of Jesus Christ fascinated me. But my peace of

mind was shattered. Later on he speaks of being 'disconsolate and prostrate. So I shift like a drifting log between resolution and paralysis of will between hope and blank despair. The struggle between the head and the heart, described with self-revelatory pathos in religious writing rages perpetually within me. It is only my lifelong practice of self-control that cloaks the gnawings of my inmost being behind a bland expression of face. I am harrassed by the idea of nothing after death. I long in my inmost being for some experience, some revelation, some authentic sign to bring the consolations of religion within my reach. Mr Sastri's fundamental difficulty is disclosed in his sentence. I cannot sign away my judgment in any sphere to another, however great and worthy. As one reads such a poignant self-revelation, he longs that there might be imparted to such a wrestling soul the secret of that personality of Jesus Christ which Mr Sastri plainly states has fascinated him. While it is always true that such a secret comes to the soul by single-hearted and humble faith in the *fact* of Christ, there are three suggestions we would venture to make. *First* it is our firm belief that for such noble minds, as those we have mentioned above, to receive real help there is no need to sign away their judgment. When Thomas the disciple expressed his *sincere doubt concerning his Risen Lord* that Lord neither cast off his doubting disciple nor asked him to sign away his judgment but He showed him His hands and His feet which bore the clear marks received from the nails on the Cross. That same Lord has still His own methods of convincing the troubled mind and of ministering peace when He asks for the obedience of faith. *Secondly*, we are growingly convinced that much of the honest doubt current in thinking circles today in India is due in no small measure to the blurring of the historical aspect of true spiritual religion. In our chapter XVIII on B. G. Tilak's masterly exposition of, the *Gītā* we have mentioned the complete disregard even by

this able Hindu scholar concerning the historicity problem affecting the entire background of the *Gītā*. Similarly Mr. K. M. Munshī in a moving article on the *Bhagavadgītā* in his weekly *The Social Welfare* for July 10, 1941, slurs over this crucial historicity problem. We are more and more convinced that thoughtful Indians can never be really satisfied with such a position. As was stated in a Conference of Indian students at Sat Tal under the threefold auspices of the Student Christian Movement, the Young Women's and Young Men's Christian Associations, held in October 1940, 'We cannot be content, as a Hindu is, to agree that whilst the historic existence of Krishna is very doubtful, that does not affect the spiritual value of the *Gītā*.' The speaker also remarked 'In the New Testament the revelation of God in history is carried a step further, because God becomes incarnate. The central fact is a historical event, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, for which we must seek evidence just as we do for any other historical event, and whose spiritual value would be lost if it could be proved that it had never actually happened ... If Jesus Christ did not, as a fact of history, live and die and rise again, the Christian faith would have to be something quite different. Fortunately the historical evidences for the truth of our belief are very strong indeed.'

#### 4. Historically Trustworthy And Ethically Satisfying

Our *third* suggestion, which we make tentatively and in all humility, is. (1) Despite the high value of the *Bhagavadgītā* for an earlier age, we believe that an increasing number of India's educated people today feel compelled to accept the conclusion of a distinguished missionary who twenty years ago affirmed: 'One rises from the reading of the *Gītā* with a feeling of bewilderment, of good things crossed out and cancelled by opposite things of revelation that does not reveal, of a way that ends in a blind tangle, of a cry for the Incarnate that has been answered by a phantom incarnation in the

shape of an unhistorical Krishna. It is brilliant and bold in spots but on the whole, it leaves the soul still on a quest and with many questions. It can never satisfy a progressive India of the future. The *Gītā* gives the cry for the Incarnate. Jesus Christ is the answer to that cry, and amid the tangle of the *Gītā* one's soul is refreshed to hear Jesus say "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life." (2) Therefore we believe that great lover of India, J. C. Winslow to be correct when he says in his book, *The Indian Mystic* (pp 28-29)

It is not altogether surprising that the educated Indian of today whilst gaining immense spiritual help from books like the *Bhagavadgītā*, revolts from the (often childish and immoral) stories of the Puranic legend. So far indeed, has this revolt gone that the Brahmo Samaj representing the more advanced wing of liberal Hinduism rejects *in toto* the whole principle of incarnation. But this is to pluck up the wheat with the tares. Surely it cannot be that this whole conception should prove to be mere illusion or this part of India's heritage simply thrown away. If therefore, India can find in Christ an Incarnation of God which she feels to be both historically trustworthy and ethically satisfying the acceptance of Christ, so far from destroying her old faith will in fact be the very means of preserving and fulfilling it. And this is, in fact, what she is finding. There is in the Gospels the story of a real human life, which for the last fifty years has been submitted to the test of a more searching historical criticism than has ever been directed upon any other life, and has stood the test. (3) There can be nothing satisfying either to mind or heart, in the conscientious conclusion of the able Indian writer who is driven to conclude that Krishna's incarnation is a camouflage, even though he feels he can add but it is for the well being of the world. On this position Dr W. S. Urquhart D. Litt. D. D. LL. D., Emeritus Principal of the Scottish Church College, Calcutta has rightly observed 'Even if for the purpose of high ethical or religious edification

God gave what might be called dramatic representations of Himself, this would not be enough. The religious demand is for absolute sincerity, not play-acting, a demand for One Who 'enters into the history of mankind and deals with its tragedy'. The conception is crystallized in the central text which tells us that God gave His Son, a part of Himself, "gave His only begotten Son," His most precious possession....It is obvious that wherever a philosophy is prevalent which regards human experience in general as of the nature of a dream, an incarnation cannot be more than a dramatic representation, indefinitely repeatable; and this is unsatisfying. An act which is regarded as of cosmic seriousness' (as is the incarnation of God in Christ), 'is *not* repeated over and over again ..Such a belief in Incarnation strengthens our belief in the significance of history ...In the words of Professor Grensted, "Eternity touches time." God reaches out to man' (*The Expository Times*, Oct. 1940, volume 52, pp 32-33). Increasingly the greatest minds of our time are realizing by personal experience how in and through Jesus Christ, God 'reaches out to man'. This has been expressed by Dr. Albert Schweitzer the musician and medical missionary as follows 'He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lakeside. He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word. "Follow thou Me!" and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfil for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him....He will reveal Himself.'

## 5. India's Illuminator and Dynamic

One main lesson of the Incarnation is that 'God reaches out to man' in the actual conditions of his life. Thus to the Jews, God became Incarnate in a Jewish home; hence it is that our Christian message must find its point of contact among the people wherever it comes. J. C. Winslow has some lines expressing a point of view we wish here to adopt as our own. In his 1926 book, *The Indian Mystic*, which has for its sub-

title the words, *Some Thoughts On India's Contribution To Christianity*, he writes (pp. 7-9) as follows "Christ came 'not to destroy' " In no other country has the quest for Truth, which is the quest for God, been pursued through so many centuries of unwearying effort, or with so remorseless a subordination of considerations of personal comfort and ease to the imperious claims of the great adventure. It is incredible that such a heritage should have been thus painfully acquired, only now to be flung upon the scrap-heap. It is unthinkable that it should not have its permanent contribution to make to the sum total of man's spiritual wisdom. Rather it is true to say that we of the West cannot do without India and the more I understand of India, the more profoundly convinced I become that the light which the Indian religious genius will be able to throw upon Christian thought and life will be almost revolutionary in character and reveal our present understanding of them as singularly partial and inadequate. Christ comes also to fulfil. So far from sweeping away the spiritual heritage of India, He will take all those elements in it which are of permanent value and bring them to a richer completion than they could have attained without Him. This is, in fact, what is taking place at the present time. India, true to her traditional temper of willingness to welcome fresh truth from all quarters, is beginning already to pay her homage and devotion to the Person of Christ. For a time she was blinded, not unnaturally to His beauty by our association of Him with our Western civilisation, or with the external paraphernalia of our Western Christianity but now India is learning to see through these disguises, and to study Him for herself afresh, in the pages of the Gospel and in the lives of His truest representatives. So seen, she finds Him to be One wholly congenial to her own spiritual atmosphere, One who strangely quickens and illuminates her own deepest intuitions, lifts her ideals yet higher and supplies her with a fresh dynamic for their attainment. If she is not yet prepared to accord Him such a position

of uniqueness as we in our zeal for His honour might desire, she is at least beginning to share in that experience of Him which has always made it impossible for His disciples ultimately to yield Him less than the highest place and we may well be content to wait, with something of God's own patience, for His yet fuller revelation to the soul of India. We may be certain that, in due time, India will find in Christ, not less, but more than we have found, and will, as I have said, help us to understand Him better. We have, indeed, good reason to expect that, out of the working of the leaven of the Spirit of Christ in India, there will emerge a new movement of religion which may have consequences of incalculable importance both for East and West.'

## 6. Satisfying India's Religious Aspirations

When we speak of Jesus being the fulfilment and consummation of much that Dnyāneshwar teaches, the present writer wishes it to be clearly understood that he emphasizes the unfulfilled aspirations and unsatisfied yearnings that lie at the root of Dnyāneshwar's message. A comparative study of Dnyāneshwar's teaching and of the teaching of Jesus, such as is beyond the scope of the present book, would show that there are very definite ways in which Jesus Christ can illuminate and consummate India's profound religious aspirations, as well as empower and energize that *bhakti* spirit in Indian religion of which Dnyāneshwar is so conspicuous an example. Wonderful as *bhakti* is when compared with the formalism and rigidity which had preceded it, *bhakti* has taken India only a certain distance on its spiritual pilgrimage, and *bhakti* still bears the marks of limitations arising from the facts of its origin. For we can never afford to forget that 'the religion of *bhakti* in India sprang up out of reaction against the rigid monism of Shankarāchārya, who had systematised and intensified the *Vedāntic* teaching about the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul. This doctrine, however intellectually

satisfying to the philosopher, left no room for a religion such as the heart of man craves. For if I myself am Brahma there is no God whom I can approach in prayer none on whom I can depend for succour or deliverance from sin none with whom I can enjoy the interchange of mutual love (*The Indian Mystic* p. 18) Similarly there is so much of the Vedāntic principle at the heart of Dnyāneshwar that we need to remember something M T Kennedy says in the book, *The Chaitanya Movement* (p. 98) The Vedāntic doctrine destroyed the possibility of that which gave meaning to salvation, namely the enjoyment of God. On the other hand something else said by M T Kennedy (p. 98) is well illustrated by Dnyāneshwar viz. that to one full of *bhakti* toward Vishnu incarnate (see our pp. 100-102) 'the very idea of salvation involves personal consciousness and a real relationship between lover and beloved. The illusory doctrine of Shankarāchārya, by which the reality of the soul's existence is only seeming cut away the basis of the Vaishnava conception of life and made of *bhakti* only a fleeting experience. All such difficulties disappear for the soul whose *bhakti* (devotion) is towards Christ Incarnate, for this Lover of the soul assures the latter of His Presence by His Indwelling Spirit. Years of thought on these matters have convinced the present writer that if India should enthrone Christ as the satisfying Object of devotion, such undesirable excesses of emotionalism as have sometimes vitiated the *bhakti* movement would be held in check by the sanity and austerity of His life and teaching whilst the consciousness of His real living Presence and accessibility to the loving worshipper would give unrestrained scope to the sentiment of true devotion (*The Indian Mystic* p. 30)

## 7 Developing Dnyāneshwar's Message By Correction

It is clear therefore that Jesus fulfils and consummates by the method of correction as well as by that of development. For if the worthiest aspect of Dnyāneshwar's teaching is to



of uniqueness as we in our zeal for His honour might desire, she is at least beginning to share in that experience of Him which has always made it impossible for His disciples ultimately to yield Him less than the highest place and we may well be content to wait, with something of God's own patience, for His yet fuller revelation to the soul of India. We may be certain that, in due time, India will find in Christ, not less, but more than we have found, and will, as I have said, help us to understand Him better. We have, indeed, good reason to expect that, out of the working of the leaven of the Spirit of Christ in India, there will emerge a new movement of religion which may have consequences of incalculable importance both for East and West.'

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reach its full fruition without being inconsistent with the onward march of knowledge, then correction and elimination will be needed in relation to such ideas of Dnyāneshwar as Nārāyan Vāman Tilak mentions in section 3 of his paper in our second chapter ( pp. 19-20 ), where the *Vedānta* philosophy which lay at the roots of Dnyāneshwar's teaching is seen to regard the individual soul as an illusion. But the teaching of Jesus and the teaching of psychology unite in showing that the reality of the individual is cardinal in importance if man is to realize his well-nigh infinite possibilities in the moral and spiritual realm. How this view works out in actual life has been shown frequently. We believe it was the late Dr. Miller of Madras who on one occasion said: 'Hinduism has so effectually overborn and crushed out the individual elements in life, so strengthened and exalted the social, that the Hindu lives and moves and has his being not in himself at all, but in the community of which he forms so insignificant a part. ..Without it he will not move, nor will he usually acknowledge any obligation to move' This is one example of what we mean when we say that the development of Dnyāneshwar's teaching will call for elimination. But this method of developing by means of the process of correction must be carried out with the utmost patience and toleration, for as the late Dr. Henry Haigh, who spent many years as a missionary in Mysore, once observed, 'The people of India must not be expected in an hour to shed the assumptions of a lifetime inherited from centuries, as a snake sheds its skin' (*Some Leading Ideas Of Hinduism*, p viii). If we bear these things in mind we shall be able to understand how significant it was that Nārāyan Vāman Tilak was able to affirm in one of his Marāthī *abhāṅgs* that 'it was over the bridge of Tukārām's verse that he himself came to Jesus Christ.'

## 8 Wherein Is Dnyāneshwar Deficient ?

### (1) N V Tilak's Diagnosis

Nārāyan Vāman Tilak has left on record in the section we have just referred to ( pages 19-20 ) wherein he considered Dnyāneshwar's religious deficiency to lie viz., in the position that human individuality ( the bedrock principle of all present day thinking ) is illusory and that Brahma alone is real meaning that the universe ( whose richness and vastness science has demonstrated ) does not exist never did exist and never will. Most fatal of all in N V Tilak's diagnosis of Dnyāneshwar's deficiency is the latter's acceptance of the *Vedāntic* doctrine of the transmigration of souls, the doctrine of the 84 of 84 lakhs of births of being reborn eight million four hundred thousand times, which is 'unthinkable and affords no resting place for the reason, as Dr Orr states in his *Christian View Of God And The World* ( pp. 115-116 ). An even more devastating criticism is that by Dr Macdonell in his able book *Sanskrit Literature* ( p. 389 ) There is no room for independent divine rule by the side of the power of the *Karma* which governs everything with iron necessity But after all, transmigration is an unproved tenet and one which in the very nature of things is unprovable. Moreover it robs life of all moral purpose, since its penalties are quite independent of memory being simply the sport of a 'Sultan in the sky' and *Karma* has been shown by the pitilessness of the Hindu system to rule out all pity for others ( see our pp. 35 37 75 375 377-8 ) So much for the implications of N V Tilak's diagnosis. Wherein another admirer and devoted student of Dnyāneshwar found him inadequate we have seen in Pandit N L Harshe's narrative on our pages 330-334 Expressing the deficiency in other terms we would say *first* that we miss in Dnyāneshwar the assurance of God as Father ( see section 2 of this chapter pp. 440-1 and section (3) below ) *secondly* that we miss the assurance of his own soul's pardon

( see our chapter xiv, section 6, p. 431 and section (4) below); and *thirdly*, that probably both these significant omissions are traceable to the fact that Dnyāneshwar's religion 'suffered impregnation with the dye of a monistic mysticism.'

## (2) *Stained By Monism*

The phrase we have just quoted comes from a lucid paper entitled *The Christian Attitude To Non-Christian Faith*, by the Rev. A. G. Hogg, D D., D Litt., formerly the Principal of the Madras Christian College, the ablest paper in *The Authority Of The Faith* ( pp 94-110 ), which is volume I in the printed reports of the Tāmbaram Conference of December 1938. Dr. Hogg there states that 'in the rise and development of non-Christian religions there has been at work the graciously patient, obstructed but not wholly thwarted, striving of God to reveal Himself ' This is 'to be carefully distinguished from an expectation of finding, among the doctrinal tenets of such religions, pure fragments of divinely revealed truth. ..In India, for example, what of divine truth and reality has, owing to the initiative of the self-revealing God, succeeded in shining through to man is all inevitably stained by the medium of monistic tendency through which it has had to break.' How true this last characterization is of Dnyāneshwar, our sections on his Out-and-Out Monism show ( see pp. 299-301 ).

## (3) *Deficient In ' The Incredibly Glorious Message' Concerning An Almighty Father*

### (1) *The 'Root Certainty' Concerning A God of Love*

It was because Jesus 'came to seek and to save that which was lost' ( St Luke 19:10 ) that He could say 'No man cometh to the Father but by Me' ( St. John 14:6 ). His words are, 'cometh unto *the Father*,' and not until men sit at the feet of Jesus and learn in *His* school will they know the profound meaning of fellowship with the All-Holy God as

"the Father" It is here that the Dnyāneshwar student meets with the abysmal difference between the message of Dnyāneshwar and the message of Jesus over twelve centuries earlier. As Dr Hogg expresses it "Neither for the Hebrew saints nor, I think, for any non Christian saint, has the term "Father," as used of God carried the wealth and simple directness of meaning that it had for Christ and ought to have for every one of us. Running as a central strand throughout the whole Bible, there is the incredibly glorious message that Almighty God is the kind of Father who longs to make of His human children little comrades, and is ever taking the initiative toward that end.. To this root-certainty of a God who is so great as to have room for and be capable of, comradeship with the little, and who yearns to bestow and enjoy this comradeship, we Christians must cling. That which offers our Father the cruellest affront, and opposes the hardest barrier to His self revealing advances, is disbelief in His love and refusal of confiding trust (*The Authority Of The Faith* pp. 94-116 ).

(ii) '*The Vedāntic God Incapable Of Influencing Character*

In contrast with this heart warming and inspiring truth of God as Father is the idea of God reflected in the *Vedāntic* philosophy which underlies all Dnyaneshwar's poetry as N V Tilak affirmed ( see our p. 19 ) Even *The Hindu* that truly great daily newspaper of Madras, said many years ago

The *Vedāntic* God is a cold dreary, philosophic conception which the Hindu masses have never cared for, which the vast majority of mankind can never be brought to reverence and which is quite incapable of influencing them in the formation of character ( Quoted in *The Higher Hinduism In Relation To Christianity* by the Rev T E. Slater p. 123 ) The simple reason why the *Vedāntic* God is quite incapable of influencing character is that the idea of such a God cuts away the very nerve of character by destroying all sense of

moral distinctions. For while *Vedāntism* emphatically affirms God's presence in us, yet it also emphatically denies that He is personally distinct from us. This removes the first postulate of all worship which is that God and the worshipper are distinct, in other words, that 'God is God, and I am I. He one person, and I another'. Apart from this bedrock distinction, religion cannot possibly have any real meaning. The same point was expressed in another way nearly 40 years ago by the late Dr Henry Haigh in his suggestive book *Some Leading Ideas Of Hinduism* (p. 123-4) 'It is a relief to turn from unintelligent irresponsible Impersonality, and from a merely mythical Personality, to Him of Whom our Lord said, "When ye pray, say, *Father*." Father! In that word we have, with real personality, kinship, authority, and love. All the elements that suggest reverence, evoke affection, and promise satisfaction, are united in the Father. To a God who is Father, sons properly render devotion and address petition, and thus all that makes religion becomes possible'. One prevalent method of defending idolatry, today is to adopt the view of regarding the idol as a means whereby Brahma becomes manifest to the infant or uncultured mind, but such a condescending compromise places the stamp of approval on a method of worship which is more and more held by educated Indians to have been one of the most degrading factors in India's long history.

#### (4) *Deficient In The Marvel Of Forgiveness*

##### (1) *What 'Brings Men To Consciousness Of Sin'?*

Dr Kraemer observed in the volume embodying his investigations before the Tāmbaram Conference, 'One will often meet representatives of the non-Christian religions who justly fill one with deep reverence, because they represent in their whole life an extraordinary degree of devotion to the reality of the world of the spiritual and eternal' (*The Christian Message In A Non-Christian World* p. 129). But 'it is-

true as Dr Kraemer adds, that we cannot but be disturbed at noting how deficient this non Christian faith is prone to be in a sense of the marvel of forgiveness. One of the most striking facts for the Christian student of Dayaneshwar is that despite the latter's unrivalled literary power and beauty (see our pp. 55-57 330-332), we know of no terminology in Dnyāneshwar's vocabulary that conveys the idea of pardon or forgiveness at the hands of God. Nor can this be surprising when we recall Dnyaneshwar's Out-and Out Monism which led him to identify himself with the Divine and when we recall his belief in *karma* and transmigration which automatically shut out all hopes of forgiveness. For *karma* 'knows not wrath or pardon'. As Edward Fitzgerald in *Omar khayyām* (p. lxxi) puts it 'Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.' Dr Kraemer (p. 345) has the pregnant sentence that it is only a continued contact with Christ that brings men to consciousness of sin and so to a sense of the need of pardon. This truth was emphasized many years ago by N. V. Tilak in one of his Marāṭhī articles in the *Dnyanodaya* (or *Rise Of Knowledge*) where he stated in his impressive Marāṭhī how his daily companionship with Christ had produced a sense of his own utter unworthiness which he never felt before giving himself to Christ.

### (ii) *Why Christ Is 'The Only Way*

Hence Dr Hogg in his *Tāmbaram* pages can say that 'when Christ quickens us to perceive the appalling fact of sin, no doctrine will suffice but that of His atoning sacrifice. And so... by the narrowest and crookedest of doctrinal bridges, men win across the gulf of doubt to that trustful and obedient faith which the Father loves to reward. But when once Christ has stirred them to wakeful perception of the engulfing depths that divide the guilty conscience from trust in God's liberty and readiness to forgive then by no other bridge than His Cross can they win to "joy and peace in believing". But when Christ succeeds in unveiling for any man the judgment of God



on sin, in this very act He cannot help making Himself, for that man, the one and only way. Christ is the only way to God that can remain permanently a thoroughfare.

(iii) *Forgiveness 'The Final Summit Of Ethical Religion'*

It is on the basis of the foregoing considerations that Dr. Nicol Macnicol is able to state in his noble book *Indian Theism* (pp 239-240), 'When law is taken up into the personality of the divine Father, and is controlled by His will of love for ends of righteousness, we have reached the final summit of ethical religion. And, further, it is only to a superficial understanding that the *Jama* law appears more in agreement with the facts of life than is a gospel of immediate and full forgiveness by a God of love and righteousness. It is true that upon him who has had the experience of such forgiveness penalties of his wrong-doing, may, and generally do, continue still to fall in bodily suffering, in social contempt, in his own remorse and regret. But to him now these penalties are altogether different from that which, without the faith of God's forgiveness, they would have seemed.. They are the chastisement of divine wisdom and goodness, manifestations of the divine grace and tenderness, not the expressions of a penal code, but the revelations of a Father's heart "God dealeth with you as with sons" (Hebrews 12 7). There is in the penitent's experience between his sufferings and those of one who does not see behind them the love of a forgiving God all the difference that there is between hell and heaven.'

(5) *Dnyāneshwar's Deficiency On Caste Reform*

(1) *Dr. Āmbedkar's Accusation*

Since God is '*our Father*,' all men are our brothers, and none is outside the pale of His love, nor should any be treated as if they were outside the pale of human brotherhood. Though the first half of this compelling and far-reaching practical truth

seems not to have escaped Dnyāneshwar's eagle eye (see *Dnyāneshwarī* IX, 460 quoted below) yet we know of no evidence that he applied the second part of the truth (human brotherhood), the part that Dr Ambedkar would say is the only concrete and tangible one for despised and neglected untouchables. On our page 354 Dr Ambedkar definitely affirms that *none* of the Hindu saints ever attacked the caste system (our italics) 'they were not concerned with the struggle between man and man. One wonders whether Dr Ambedkar was overlooking the beautiful stories about Eknāth's help to Mahārs, though perhaps Dr Ambedkar would say these are no exceptions (see *Eknāth* volume 2 in this series, p. 257 etc) since Eknāth seems not to have initiated any campaign on their behalf. It is a serious charge against the *bhakti* saints but we know of nothing in Dnyaneshwar's life and teaching that controverts this, despite the fact that he himself had been cruelly treated as if he were an out-caste, though he was a Brāhmin. Great and comprehensive as was Dnyāneshwar's message in that for the first time in Marāṭhā history his *Dnyāneshwarī* made the message of the *Bhagavadgītā* available to the previously neglected women and *Shūdras* (see our p. 8-9)—and no one must minimize that achievement yet we know of no reference in Dnyaneshwar's thousands of verses which exclude him from the gravamen of Dr Ambedkar's accusation against Hinduism and its 'saints' concerning India's untouchables. It goes without saying that the problem of the untouchable had not in Dnyaneshwar's day caused the storm that rages today, even if it had caused so much as a ripple on the surface of India's social system. *But the question had arisen* as the following evidence shows.

(ii) *The Great Shankarāchārya And The Chāndāla*

In 1931 there was published in Marāṭhī a Life of the great Shankarāchārya (about A. D 737-769) by Vāsudev Vishnu Kavi who on pp. 19-20 tells the story that one day

Shankarāchārya was going to bathe on the banks of the Ganges at *Kāshī* (Benāres). Taking with him four dogs he saw approaching him a *Chāndāla* (that is, one born of a Brāhmin mother and a *Shūdra* father). As the *Chāndāla* came very near, Shankarāchārya said to him, 'Get aside a little, don't touch me.' As soon as the *Chāndāla* heard these words he replied smilingly, 'Most holy sir, your preaching is doubtless full of the *Vedānta* and of the *Nyāya Shāstra*. You have also a generous heart. Nevertheless, though your spiritual bliss is not marred by attachment to the world, yet you are making the mistake of distinguishing between "I" and "thou" which is exceedingly strange. Many *sannyāsīs* who are like you in saffron robes are deceiving people in various ways. You told me to get aside. Which did you refer to, my body or my soul? In either case you surely are mistaken. For if you mean my body, then it is only like yours in being dependent on food, and if you mean my soul, then the Great Spirit being everywhere and of *one* form only, where comes the reason for any distinction between a Brāhmin and an untouchable? Though wine and the Ganges water differ from each other, yet they both reflect the same sun. Similarly, though your body and mine are different, yet the Great Soul is one. Therefore how do you say that I am a *Chāndāla* and you a Brāhmin? You forgot that the soul is identical with the Supreme Spirit, and so you harboured pride about your body without any reason. Though you are in holy *Kāshī* (Benāres), yet your garb is unholy. All this being due to *māyā* (illusion), even great pandits have been tempted, then no wonder if even you are tempted.' The end of the story shows that, while Brāhmins would usually hold in utter contempt anything said by an untouchable, yet after the great Shankarāchārya had patiently heard all the *Chāndāla* said, he concluded 'Brother! the philosophy you have laid down is all true. There are pandits well versed in all the *Shāstras*, but very rarely does one find any who know the truth.' Then on the very spot Shankarāchārya composed a

beautiful Sanskrit hymn which is called *Manīshā Panchak* (five verses expressing his new conception) In this hymn the great Shankarāchārya said among other things One who is so firmly devoted to the blissful holy eternal and Supreme Spirit be he a *Chāndāla* or be he a Brāhmin *he is my guru* (preceptor) Concerning this beautiful story Dr Āmbedkar would say that to set forth the truth that all men are equal in the eyes of God is a very innocuous proposition which nobody can find dangerous to believe in but he would ask What practical difference has such teaching made in the social treatment meted out to my oppressed fellow men and in the granting to them of bedrock human rights ?

(iii) *Does The Gītā In IX 32 Refer To OUT Castes?*

Most of the leading Marāṭhi scholars maintain that untouchability is referred to in the *Bhagavadgītā* IX. 32

*Mām hi partha vyapāśhritya ye pi syuḥ pāpā  
yonayaḥ |*

*Strīyo vaiśhyās tathā śhūdrās te pi yānti parām  
gatim ||*

Bāl Gangādhār Tilak in his *Gītā Rahasya* (vol I p. 614) translates this Sanskrit verse as follows — O Pārtha, by taking shelter in Me, women, Vaiśhyas and Shudras and other lower classes, in which birth has been taken as a result of sin, attain the highest perfection Lokamānya Tilak then expends three pages in defending his inclusion of 'other lower classes' in this verse and he has another page on the subject in his second volume (pp. 1059-60) Laxman Rāmchandra Pangārkar in his two-volume *Marāṭhi History Of Marāṭhi Literature* (vol. I pp. 550-1) takes the same view as do also Sadāshiv Shāstri Bhide in his Marāṭhi translation of the *Bhagavadgītā* (p. 118) Vināyak Nārāyan Joshi Sākhare in his Marāṭhi commentary on the *Dnyāneshwari* (p. 289) and Haribhakti-Parāyan Bankatswāmī in his similar commentary (p. 263) The two last named give a Marāṭhi application of

the *Gītā* chapter IX, verse 32 of which we give the English below. In his lucid notes on the crucial word *pāpayoni* in the *Gītā* IX. 32 Lokamānya B. G. Tilak is honest enough to admit (*Gītā Rahasya*, vol. II, pp. 1059-60) that 'some commentators have said that the word "*pāpayoni*" in the 32nd stanza is not independent, but applies equally to women, Vaishyas, and Shūdras, because no one is born as a woman, or a Vaishya, or a Shūdra, unless he has committed some sin in previous births. According to them, the word "*pāpayoni*" is a common word, and women, Vaishyas, and Shūdras, are specific divisions of such *pāpayoni*, given by way of illustration. But this interpretation is not correct according to me. The word "*pāpayoni*" indicates such tribes as are referred to as "criminal tribes" in present legislation.'

(iv) Reference In '*Dnyāneshwarī*' ix. 460 To 'OUT-Castes'

More important from the standpoint of the present book is the fact that Dnyāneshwar himself takes the same view as the five great Marāthī scholars mentioned above. In his *Dnyāneshwarī*, his Marāthī commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*, Dnyāneshwar has 32 verses (chapter IX, 443-474) of Marāthī poetry expounding the one *Gītā* verse (IX. 32), now under consideration. In expounding the meaning of the word '*pāpayoni*' he has in his *Dnyāneshwarī* made use of the word '*antyaja*' (untouchable). In their Marāthī exposition of the *Dnyāneshwarī* both Sākhare and Bankatswāmī give the meaning of the *Dnyāneshwarī* verse, IX. 460, in Marāthī which in English would read something as follows — 'So long as the *bhakta* (or worshipper) has not become one with Me, so long do the distinctions remain between Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shūdras, women and the *antyaja* (untouchables).'

(v) Theory Without Practice

We trust it is in no spirit of perverseness that we say we are not convinced that the word *pāpayoni* refers to 'untouch-

ables, though we do so with the utmost tentativeness, because of our high regard for the weight of Marathi scholarship in favour of this view. The main reason for our scepticism is that if all these authorities, including Dnyāneshwar himself are correct, then there is one fact which defies explanation, viz., the fact pointed out by the late Dr J N Farquhar in his *Outline Of The Religious Literature Of India* (p. 301) that 'no out-caste is admitted to *Bhāgavata* temples in Mahārāshtra. That these temples had been in existence for over five hundred years in Dnyāneshwar's time is clear from Shankarachārya's hymn to Pāndurang the chief deity of these *Bhāgavata* temples. And this in spite of the admittedly democratizing influence of *bhakti* in securing admission of low castes into the temples and into all other *bhakti* circles such as the *Wārkan* Sect (see our p. 298) etc. So recently as the early years of the present century a *Chambhār* woman was brought before the Magistrate for having defiled both the image of Vithobā and its temple at Pandharpur because for a whole fortnight she had gone in and out of the temple in the guise of a pure Maratha. We find it hard to believe that such a state of things would have grown up had it been an accepted fact that the *Gītā* taught the equality of all in the sight of God, that is of untouchables and caste people alike. But the more serious aspect from the standpoint of our book is that although Dnyāneshwar himself in his *Dnyāneshwari* (IX. 460) did definitely lay down the spiritual equality of all in the eyes of God that is, the equality of the *antyaja* (his own word which means untouchables) and the high born, and although he must have known of the Shankarachārya story and the Shankarachārya hymn, yet we do not read of his having insisted that these despised people should receive the practical benefits corresponding to the acknowledged equality. It is impossible to refrain from contrasting with Dnyāneshwar's silence on the needed caste reform the course of action taken by Jesus. It is acknowledged by all that one of the historical causes of the death of

Jesus by crucifying was that He insisted on treating all men as equal, even to the length of accepting invitations to the homes of the despised, so that the nickname was given Him of being 'The Friend of Sinners' (Matthew 11: 19, Luke 7: 34). But have we, the so called disciples of that 'Friend,' always been loyal to His principles?

## 9. Dnyāneshwar And Christian Contemplation

### (1) 'The Indian Mystic'

Though correction and elimination are necessary in relation to certain aspects of Dnyāneshwar's message, we must not overlook the contribution he and his fellow Poet Saints can make on the contemplative aspect of religious experience. For, since the Christian faith began as an Eastern religion, it is certain that the people of the East are able to throw an illuminating light on some of the meditative aspects of the Christian life. This is particularly true in the matter of contemplation and it is here where the use of the term *samādhi* by Dnyāneshwar and the Poet Saints in the sense of profound meditation and ecstasy approximates *in part* to the Christian experience. We therefore commend to the reader the following lines from Winslow's *Indian Mystic* (pp 67-8). 'If we can at all judge from the instance of Sunder Singh what the character of Indian Christian mysticism will be, we may expect that such condition of ecstasy will hold a not unimportant place in it. Sunder's times of ecstasy come to him frequently, and are always full of refreshment to him. They are generally accompanied by visions of heaven, in which the Figure of Christ is always central. It is no dream state, but "a waking state, a state of concentrated capacity of thought," and yet he, like all the mystics, feels that words are quite inadequate to describe the experiences which he enjoys at such times... The goal of contemplation for the Christian, whether that contemplation be accompanied by ecstasy or not, will always be union with God as He is known to us in Jesus

Christ Our goal is never *kaivalya* (isolation or absorption into the Divine Essence) 'except in the sense of isolation from the old ego which is crucified with Christ Our goal is akin rather to that union with God which Hindu *bhakti* has conceived and has summed up in the four words *salokatā*, *samīpatā*, *sarūpatā*, *sāyujyatā*

(2) *Salokatā, Samīpata Sarupata, Sayujyatā With Christian Meanings*

These four words, so important in Hindu *bhakti* provide an interesting study in the *bhakti* literature of India, representing as they do four stations in the progress of *bhakti*. *Salokatā* meant living in the sight of God, *samīpatā* 'living near God, *sarūpata* being changed into His image *sāyujyatā* becoming one with Him. And all this was expressed in terms of the temple. The faithful visited the temples daily and thus were within God's sight (*salokatā*) They built their houses around the temple and so were near God (*samīpatā*) They contemplated the image in the temple and were turned into His likeness (*sarupata*) Some *bhaktas* it is claimed, were absorbed into the idol in the temple and attained *sayujyata* (*Āśramas Past and Present* p. 101 slightly adapted) Now see what is possible by putting a Christian content into these four words. The *first* is being in the same plane with God living as St Paul says "in the heavenlies. The *second* is nearness, an association which is less than union, like that of the disciples intimacy with the Master during His earthly life. The *third* is likeness as the divine image begins to shine forth in the soul that loves. The *last* is union (literally "yokedness," as *sāyujyata* is from the same root as *yoga* with a prefix implying "with") when the separating barriers crumble and the disciple comes to know the meaning of the words "Abide in Me, and I in you. "It is no longer I that live, but Christ who lives in me. "Such a union is then wrought," says



St. John of the Cross, "when God bestows on the soul that supreme grace which makes the things of God and the soul one by the transformation which renders the one a partaker of the other. The soul seems to be God rather than itself, and indeed is God by participation, though in reality preserving its 'own natural substance as distinct from God, as it did before, although transformed in Him, as the window preserves its own substance distinct from that of the rays of the sun shining through it and making it light'" ( *The Indian Mystic*, pp. 68-69 )

## 10. 'Christian Yoga' In Mahārāshtra

Dnyāneshwar must be accepted as one of the final authorities on *yoga*. In his enriching book on N. V. Tilak, J. C. Winslow has shown how this idea, *when truly Christianized*, has enriched the Indian Christian Church of Mahārāshtra by pointing out that the goal to which Nārāyan Vāman Tilak was led by his Christianized *bhakti mārga* 'was nothing less than *yoga*, or union with Christ' If N. V. Tilak is not to be misunderstood and misquoted at this crucial point, it is all-important to remember that it was 'the secondary meaning of *yoga* as "the yoking of the human spirit with God," which seems to date from at least the beginning of the Christian era,' that N. V. Tilak emphasized. Our intimacy with N. V. Tilak confirms the fact that 'he longed for, and experienced in ever-deepening reality, such a closeness of union with his Lord that his own separate personality, without losing its richness or value, should nevertheless be merged in the larger ocean of the life of Christ. "Now it is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me," was for him something much more than metaphor' ( *Nārāyan Vāman Tilak, The Christian Poet of Mahārāshtra*, p. 106 ) On this experience of close union with Christ the late N. V. Tilak has probably more hymns in Marāṭhī than all the English hymns on this subject put together. The place this truth held in N. V. Tilak's life is well illustrated

by Dr Macnicol's beautiful English rendering of N V Tilak's hymn on 'Communion With Christ.

As the moon and its beams are one  
 So, that I be one with Thee,  
 This is my prayer to Thee, my Lord  
 This is this beggar's plea.  
 I would snare Thee and hold Thee ever,  
 In loving wifely ways  
 I give Thee a daughter's welcome,  
 I give Thee a sister's praise.  
 As words and their meaning are linked  
 Serving one purpose each  
 Be Thou and I so knit, O Lord,  
 And through me breathe Thy speech.  
 O be my soul a mirror clean,  
 That I may see Thee there  
 Dwell in my thought, my speech, my life,  
 Making them glad and fair  
 Take Thou this body O my Christ,  
 Dwell as its soul within  
 To be an instant separate,  
 I count a deadly sin.

[Those interested in comparing the English renderings of N V Tilak's hymns by Dr Macnicol and others with their Marāṭhī originals should take note that this hymn is numbered 126 in the eleventh edition (1912) of the *Upāsana Sangit* the hymn book used by all the non Roman sections of Mahā rāshtra's Christian Church, but that it is numbered 289 in the twelfth edition (1923) the thirteenth (1924) the fourteenth (1930) fifteenth (1933) and the sixteenth editions (1939) The numbers of the hymns quoted in Winslow's *Life Of N V Tilak* (1923) are the numbers as given in the eleventh edition which was prepared by N V Tilak, the preface having been signed by him on June 1 1912.]

## 11. N. V. Tilak's Christian 'Sannyās' or Renunciation In Christian Life

Just as with Dnyāneshwar the spirit of the *sannyāsī*, or renunciation, 'is the highest of all kinds of *yoga*' (see the *Dnyāneshwarī* XII, 125-134), so the spirit of renunciation was seen in its truly Christianized form in the modern Marāthī Christian poet N. V. Tilak of whom Sir Nārāyan Chandāvarkar said 'he had the true spirit of Dnyāneshwar.' N. V. Tilak's enjoyment of union with Christ, which is the truest *yoga*, 'was independent of worldly comfort or physical well-being nay, rather, it was deepened by any opportunity of sharing in the Cross of Christ Outside the Bible, there were few books dearer to Tilak than Thomas A. Kempis' *Imitation Of Christ*, with its exultation in the Cross.' All this is expressed in many a Marāthī devotional gem from N. V. Tilak's pen. Here are two examples. The first, translated by Dr. Macnicol, expresses the joy of Christian *Sannyās* or renunciation

*From this day onward Thou art mine,  
Brother beloved and King divine,  
From this day on.*

My food I'll get in serving Thee,  
Thy thoughts shall be as eyes to me,  
I'll live and breathe to sing Thy praise  
From this time onward all my days.  
Thy feet I choose, the world resign,  
For Thou, from this day on, art mine,  
Brother beloved and King divine !  
To Thee I offer child and wife,  
My home and all my worldly life,  
To Thee this body, too, I bring,  
To Thee surrender everything.  
My very self henceforth is Thine  
O take it, Lord, for Thou art mine,  
Brother beloved and King divine !

My thoughts and words are all of Thee,  
 Thou Wisdom Joy and Liberty  
 Now Thee and me no rift can part  
 One not in semblance but in heart  
 Set free am I and for me shine  
 The joys of heaven, since Thou art mine,  
 Brother beloved and King divine !

*From this day onward Thou art mine  
 Brother beloved and King divine  
 From this day on*

The second example of N V Tilak's Christian yoga or union with Christ his Lord is the following, which was translated by Father Winslow and expresses what a vision of Christ had meant to Tilak during the July or August of 1917, a little less than two years before his earthly end :

Ye ask and so to tell ye I am bold  
 Yea, with these eyes did I the Christ behold,-  
 Awake, not sleeping did upon Him gaze  
 And at the sight stood tranced with amaze..  
 I called to Him in sudden agony  
 My child, He answered, wherefore dost thou cry ?  
 I am before thee, yea and I within  
 ' Merged in a sea of blindness hast thou been  
 ' Lord grant me eyes to see ! I cried again,  
 And clasped His feet in ecstasy of pain  
 He raised me up He held me to His side,  
 And then I cannot tell what did betide  
 But this alone I know that from that day  
 This self of mine hath vanished quite away  
 Great Lord of yoga, Thou hast yoked with Thee  
 Saith Dāsa even a poor wight like me !

## 12. Diwān Bahādūr Appāsāmy On Christian 'Yoga' In Prayer

### (1) 'Fifty Years' Pilgrimage Of A Convert'

To all students of Dnyāneshwar and of the *bhakti* poets we commend an extraordinarily interesting pamphlet of over 40 pages on 'The Use Of Yoga In Prayer' which was first published in 1926 and was republished at the beginning of 1941. It was written by Diwān Bahādūr A. S. Appāsāmy Pillāi, a retired District Court Pleader, Ināmdār and Mittādār of Pālamcottah, 'South India, when he was 79 years old a few months before his death, and has now been republished by his son, the well known Indian Christian scholar Dr. A. J. Appāsāmy, in a fascinating book entitled *Fifty Years' Pilgrimage Of A Convert*. This latter was the title of an earlier and smaller book in 1924 which is now republished with the pamphlet on 'Yoga In Prayer' and a third paper on 'My Conversion.' A Foreword to the whole was written in 1921 by the present Bishop of Madras, and is now republished with the rest, as embodying 'the rich spiritual experience' of half a century. Anyone reading these, says the Bishop, 'need not fear the researches of earnest Christians like the Diwān Bahādūr into the truths contained in the old religions of India;' for 'the new missionary pondering how he should present the truth to India will find guidance in this book.' In the chapter on 'My Conversion' the Diwān Bahādūr shows one main factor of his conversion at 24 to have been that 'though the Hindu scriptures assert the existence of one Supreme and Universal God free from all faults, Shiva is not that being,' since 'immoral actions are attributed to him,' and careful study also convinced him that 'neither Vishnu nor Brahmā was worthy of divine reverence.' Fifty years of ever-deepening Christian experience, which included fellowship 'with people like Sādhu Sunder Singh who was my guest for nearly a month,' convinced Appāsāmy Pillāi that 'the foundation was

laid so far as India was concerned for faith in Christ by its own *Rishis*. A period of special study of the Christian teaching about the Holy Spirit, led him to ask a question which might be asked not only all over India but in every Church in Christendom. Is it too much to infer that the reason why most people who profess and call themselves Christians, show so few of the graces of Christian character is simply that they have never received the Holy Spirit? Dr Appasamy has bestowed a real boon on all book lovers in India by arranging in one publication of 168 pages the reprint of these three smaller books.

(2) *Indian Christian Autobiography On Christian Yoga*

Bearing in mind the secondary meaning of the word *yoga*, 'the yoking of the human spirit with God, as set forth in section 6 as the sense in which Narayan Vaman Tilak used the word when describing the deeper aspects of union with Christ, let us turn to Diwan Bahadur A. S. Appasamy Pillai's autobiography on this subject. There are, he says, at least two important reasons why every one who is anxious to realize God should make a careful study of *yoga*. All of us know the innumerable difficulties caused by distraction in prayer. By prayer I mean that highest of all spiritual exercises, *the attempt to realize steadily and continuously the Presence of God*. If distraction makes vocal prayer ineffective, it makes all but impossible this prayer of contemplation which does not use the medium of words. Now *yoga* teaches us the secret of concentration. By following it, our mind becomes so rivetted that it ceases to wander. So all the confusion and havoc which the mind works and in the midst of which we stand helpless is brought to an effective stop by *yoga*. The Holy Spirit appeared in the shape of a dove to our Lord but He may appear and has appeared in other forms to the anointed, and those who have close fellowship with Him receive..

blessings of a high order. The stage of *samādhi*, in which the yogi becomes utterly unconscious, is not always inevitable. . The Christian practising *yoga* need not allow himself to go into that stage, for to him the highest bliss consists not in the passing away of the individual soul, but in its persistence in fellowship with the Divine Soul.' (See our Appendix on 'Samādhi As Ecstasy.')

### (3) Sādhū Sunder Singh's 'Ecstasies'

The Diwān Bahādūr then compares and contrasts his visions with those enjoyed by Sādhū Sunder Singh and he goes on to say 'It now remains to give some indication of the inner life of the Spirit, which I consider to have become my most privileged possession within the last ten years of my life, together with some of the spiritual experiences and realizations which have accompanied it' In their notable book, *The Sādhū*, Dr. Streeter and Dr. A. J. Appāsāmy regard Sādhū Sunder Singh's 'experiences as ecstasies in which the mind is lifted up above the circumstances of the surrounding world' On this the Diwān Bahādūr observes 'I am one with Sunder Singh in the importance that I attach to these moments of light and liberty. "They are a great source of illumination, solace and physical refreshment," quoting Sunder Singh himself. "in fact a pearl of great price which I would not give up for the whole world." ' The Diwān Bahādūr adds 'Christ to me is always the central figure in these visions, ineffable and indescribable,' which 'appear to represent the working of the Holy Spirit in human hearts, raising them to ecstasy and building up and strengthening them. . Ecstasy is not a mere trance or hallucination, but is a dive to the bottom of spiritual things, and instead of exhausting or tiring the aspirant, as in the case of psychic media, refreshes and strengthens him It is not a dream-state, but one in which the mind can think steadily and continuously on the same subject without being disturbed by distractions, or tired by persistent concentration on the same topic. The

inspiration under which the books of Scripture were written was probably an instance of this ecstatic condition which can be described as a hyper stimulation of the natural faculties of insight and understanding which in men of high ideals, schooled by the discipline of a noble life, must inevitably follow from personal communion with a personal God. It seems to me that that verse 'Christ in you the hope of glory' (Colossians i. 27) and that other verse, "reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord we are being transfigured into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit reigning as Lord" (2 Corinthians iii. 18 weaving together various renderings of this rich verse) give us a nearer approximation to the real truth. Spurgeon the great preacher and saint, prays, "Lord, paint upon the eyelids of my soul the image of Thy Son

#### (4) *Possibilities of Spirit Filled Souls*

The Diwān Bahādur reassures his Christian readers thus 'No man need be afraid either of the technique or of the strangeness of yoga. Every Christian in India who desires to come into the spiritual heritage of India and who is eager to attain a vivid and intimate sense of God must endeavour to study the technique of yoga and to practise it in a selfless spirit of earnest striving. In the prayer of contemplation, the union that takes place is that of the human and the Divine Spirit. A *Jīvan Mukta* is one who is intoxicated with God. I have written in this strain of my dearest and most valued of spiritual gifts not in a boastful spirit, but because I feel convinced that a knowledge of these facts will serve to refute some of the positions of the critics of the Bible and of Christianity who seem to move altogether on a lower mental plane judging things by what they understand with their reason, and who are unaware of the achievements which are possible for men filled with the Holy Spirit.' Such critics say that miracles and other supernatural phenomena are against natural law but they are in harmony with spiritual law which is a higher law.



### 13. The Danger Lurking In A Christianized 'Yoga'

Having said so much on the subject of a Christianized *yoga* as exemplified in the two cases we have referred to, viz., Nārāyan Vāman Tilak of Mahārāshtra and Dīwān Bahādūr A. S. Appāsāmy Pillāi of South India, we shall not be misunderstood if we sound the warning that the sure test of a truly Christlike *yoga* will be that of service for others. 'Great Lord of *yoga*' was how N. V. Tilak addressed his King and Saviour and it was in his imitation of Jesus Christ in strenuous service as an earnest Indian patriot that N. V. Tilak avoided the dangers lurking in *yoga*. That there *are* dangers was made clear in an article contributed to the *Madras Guardian* of May 29, 1941 by D. J. Savarirayan M A., of Bhīmavaram in Madras Presidency, who wrote as follows — 'We have done well in not attempting to copy the Jewish practice of speaking in tongues when we are at the height of a spiritual experience. But to me the Hindu practice of *yoga*, to which prominence is of late being given by the Indian Christian *bhaktas* as a religious exercise of a high order, appears to be equally irrelevant. The arguments which St. Paul adduced when discouraging the practice of speaking in tongues in the Corinthian Church may be employed, *mutatis mutandis*, in connection with *yoga* practice also ... His decision, in 1 Corinthians XIV. 19, "In Church I would rather say five words with my own mind for the instruction of other people than ten thousand words in a tongue" (Dr. Moffatt's rendering), shows not only the level-headedness of the apostle but the spirit which should dominate a Christian.' It would appear that the comments here made are based on the root-meaning of the term *yoga* and not the secondary meaning of union with God adopted by N. V. Tilak.

### 14. A Vigorous Criticism Of 'Yoga'

That D. J. Savarirayan's vigorous and healthy criticism of *yoga* is based on the original Hindu interpretation, as dis-

tinct from N. V. Tilak's Christianized meaning of the term would appear also to be indicated by the following in the *Guardian* article referred to—A yogi may be selfless but is not unselfish. Yoga may be a difficult art but experience of difficulty in the performance of an act is not the criterion for its worthwhileness. I am not perturbed over my inability to stand an elephant on my chest nor am I disheartened if I cannot sit motionless and speechless in yoga for twelve consecutive hours. But my spirit is ill at ease when I realise that my prayer for others is not so intensely sincere as that of George Müller for his orphans. Jesus constantly prayed but seldom practised yoga. The principle that guided Jesus' life was "For *their* sake I consecrate myself" (St. John 17: 19). But the principle that rules a yogi's life is "For *my* sake I sanctify myself." Prayer in one of its aspects partakes of the nature of yoga when the *bhakta* occasionally cries halt to his mental activities "to be still and know that He is God" (Ps. 46: 10). Jesus fast in the wilderness immediately after the baptism was prayer in its yoga aspect. Yoga should not absorb the whole of a *bhakta's* prayer life. Yoga with its studied callousness to the needs and sufferings of others euphemistically called "detached outlook on life," is religion as an opiate. Specialisation in the practice of yoga develops abnormally the "silence" aspect in the *bhakta's* spiritual life, but destroys his spiritual life as a whole. We need no more worry about bringing into vogue the cult of yoga, which was so popular with the spiritual aristocrats among our noble ancestors, than we do to train our ear muscles which, despite their immense helpfulness to the members of the animal kingdom, have become inactive in man through disuse. Time was when the Indian Christian fought shy of everything Hindu, imagining that it must be anti-Christian. The pendulum has since swung far to the other side and for the last two decades it has become almost a fashion with him to extol everything Hindu as good, bad and indifferent. I consider

that the process of reaction to things Hindu has now reached its synthetic stage, when we should be courageous to reject things irrelevant in spite of their Hindu heritage. Our misfortune is that there are not a sufficient number of *friends* to criticise us. ..A *yogī* may be visited for his *darshan* by the superstitious folk, and through curiosity by *yogic* experts, students of religion and American tourists, but no anxious youth despairing of life, say, for want of employment, goes to him for advice, nor a contrite woman who has fallen in life for comfort and strength. Claim is made that wonders and miracles have been done through the power of *yoga*. Granted. But his foundation is on sinking sand whose conception of worthwhileness of an act is determined by its capacity to perform miracles. "I may speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but if I have no love I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. Love never disappears, as for tongues they will cease," as for *yoga* and *tapas* they will become irrelevant. Our capacity for original thinking is not in any way endangered if we repeat again in this connection the eternal words of St. Paul, "The greatest of all is LOVE." These are healthy words and worthy of consideration.

## 15. Jesus Christ 'The Lord Of Yoga'

Our intimate fellowship with N V Tilak in his closing years, leads us to say with emphasis that *his* interpretation and Christianization of *yoga* avoided the very dangers that the writer in the *Guardian* has so vigorously pointed out. It is worthy of note that the Indian Christian leaders who have written the new book on *Āśramas* referred to in the next paragraph answer the question 'What is Christian *yoga*?' by saying. 'At the least it is transformation of oneself into the figure and image of Christ' (p. 289). At the same time we cannot afford to forget the warning of our Christian pandit whose debt to the *Dnyāneshwarī* is made clear on pages 330-332 in this present book, and who on page 334 tells us of the impor-

tant examples of *yogis* who have been guilty of evil practices even after attaining the power of *samādhi*. Plainly the reconciling factor and sovereign remedy lie in N V Tilak's secret of union with Christ which places Christ in such a position of supremacy that N V Tilak, in the poem we have quoted at the close of section 11 above, could address his Saviour as great Lord of *yoga*. A similarly reconciling view is that set forth by Dr Haigh in his *Leading Ideas Of Hinduism* (pp 135-6). The *yoga* discipline is the distortion and exaggeration of necessary truth. It is vital for all men that the flesh should be subjugated to spirit. This was the truth enforced by Christ in those great and awful words in which He bids us cut off the hand or foot or pluck out the eye, if they cause us to stumble. This was what He meant also, when He bade us renounce home and friends and all that we have, if need be, that we may be His disciples. There is necessity in all lives for self control and in most for stern self-curtailment. But it is no base mutilation that our Lord preaches no process of slow suicide. His desire for men is not that they should withdraw from the world, but that they should pass through it radiant with energy and overflowing with love, touching it at all points and touching it always to bless. Jesus is Himself our type as well as our teacher. He was the true *Yogi* surrendering Himself absolutely to the will of God, and sacrificing Himself without measure in the service of men.

## 16 The Place Of The Āsrama In Religion

### (1) Āsramas Past And Present

When Dnyāneshwar wrote his *Dnyāneshwari* in the late 13th century *āshrams* (or *āśramas*) had probably flourished for some 1700 years as a powerful factor in the life and literature of the Hindus. It is an interesting fact that of

the two *Gītās* in the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Anugītā*, the former does not make any specific reference to *āśramas*, while the later describes the condition of each *āśrama*. This is the opinion expressed on page 82 of an able book of over 300 pages entitled *Āśramas Past And Present*, written by three notable South Indian Christians, P Chenchiah, V. Chakkarai and A. N. Sudarisanam, the last-mentioned being the competent editor of the *Madras Guardian*. It was published as the first book of the Indian Christian Book Club. If its dates can be trusted, '*āśrama dharma* was at least a century old' (p 47) when Alexander the Great invaded India in May, 325 B C and the places we usually call *āshrams* 'came into existence centuries' earlier still. This means that *āshrams* (hermitages, in this Madras book described as *āśramas*) have been shaping Hinduism for nearly three thousand years. The point of contact between this book on *āśramas* and our present volume in the Poet Saints Series is that the three Indian Christian authors of the former have put forth as part of their thesis that the 'transformation of oneself into the image of Christ has to be undertaken in an *āśrama*'. There will of course be very different views held on this all-important subject, for if residence in an *āśrama* be necessary to attain to Christlikeness, then this achievement is ruled out for the vast majority of mankind. On the other hand, the new angle from which this book on *āśramas* considers old problems is illustrated by the new meaning and pronunciation on which the authors insist. *Priyashushya* in the *Guardian* says: 'To start with, every reader should correctly pronounce the word *āśramas* and understand its meaning. The first letter is long and has the sound of the first two letters in "aunt." The Sanskrit word ends with *ma* and not *m*. The *sh* sound and the clipped *m* are Hindi variations, not Sanskrit. In the result we pronounce the word as "*Āśrama*" not Ash-Ram .... If we remember that *A* is long in *Āśrama*, a profound consequence follows. *A* long in Sanskrit is an

intensifying prefix while A short is a negative A long in *Āsrama* means intense *śrama* or effort while if it were short it would mean no effort Many good Christians entertain the notion that an *āśrama* is a den of lazy loons and I am told if you ask to be directed to an *āśrama* in Ceylon you are met with the reply "Oh! you mean the place where people are lazy" Now these disastrous inferences follow from want of elementary knowledge of Sanskrit, pressed into service to discredit an institution which orthodoxy does not understand. The book rubs in mercilessly the fact that an *āśrama* is a place of intense spiritual exertion and explodes the current myth about it (*Madras Guardian*, March 27 1941) This meaning and interpretation of the word usually written as *ashram* are the basis of this informing and stimulating book.

## (2) '*Āśramas Hindu And Christian*

In its long history the word *āśrama* has had three meanings *first* its caste meaning as referring to social status *secondly* its use to indicate the stage of life of which Hindus say there are four the *Brahmacharya Āśrama* (or student stage) the *Grihastha Āśrama* (the householder) the *Vānaprastha Āśrama* (retirement from the world) the *Sannyās Āśrama* (life of renunciation) and *thirdly* the word *āśrama* refers to a place of residence. On the relation of *āśramas* to caste, the authors of the book under reference advocate strongly the renunciation of caste and the restoration of *āśramas* (p. 300) Their standpoint is that in both the second and third senses the *āśrama* is slowly being Christianized and they believe the Christian *āśrama* symbolizes the fact that the Spirit of Christ has found expression in a language familiar to our race (p. xii) The mind of our Lord draws in sympathy the deepest spiritual language of India, and of all the conjunctions between East and West none are so charged with power for good as the meeting of the spirit of Jesus with the spiritual streams that *āśramas* of

the past have set in Hinduism;' and 'whoever misses this conjunction loses the key to read the soul of India aright' (p. xiv). How far the three authors have succeeded in their thesis only time can show. But the flavour of their method is shown as follows 'Sādhu Sunder Singh, when he became a Sādhu, was fully aware of the nature of the high calling he received, for his mother impressed upon him the high ideal of *sannyāsa*. He demonstrated to the world how Christ can sanctify, exalt, enlarge and glorify the *sannyāsa*. He not only received it from Hindu culture but, by his saintly ministration, gave it back to Hinduism purified and transfigured by the spirit of the love of Christ' (p. vii). The book aims at the establishment of such Christian hermitages for retired people in various parts of India where retired Christian men with their wives may give themselves to study and meditation and to forms of service to needy people in their neighbourhood.

### (3) *Christian 'Āśramas' And Their Ideals*

Christian *āśramas* and their chief aims are described as follows:—'The realisation of the value of meditation and contemplation in prayer, the pursuit of the Holy Spirit as the dynamic of Christian life, the desire to serve the poor and suffering, distinguish them from other groups and types of Christian work' (p. 302). Many will feel this sentence supplies a luminous description of what true Christian life should be under all conditions, whether inside or outside the institutions referred to. On another page (313-4) we read: 'Should the Christian *āśrama* realise to any extent the promise of its calling, it will attract (1) Christians anxious to scale higher levels of Christian experience, (2) Christians who are desirous to reproduce the figure and fact of Christ in their personal lives, (3) Christians who want to realise Christian principles in group-life, (4) Hindus who are anxious to know what new revelations have come to men outside Hinduism, (5) Hindus who are attracted by

the example of Jesus, by the ideals of His teaching and are desirous of reducing them to practice (6) Hindus who accept Jesus and His teachings but are not prepared to accept the cultus of Christianity as embodied in the historic Church. In addition to over 200 pages on the Hindu āśramas there is a valuable section on Christian āśramas which includes 25 pages describing fourteen of these in various parts of India, from which it is clear these Christian āśramas are doing exceedingly useful work in their several arenas. But, again, most readers will be inclined to ask What work distinctively Christian not done elsewhere, is being done in these Christian āśramas?

#### (4) *Must We Still 'Go To The Forest'?*

This book on āśramas is marked by real ability and breaks new ground by putting together a mass of facts from rare Indian sources, and especially by its plea for the āśrama to be given a much more definite place in Indian Christianity. The Indian writers referred to have so abundantly proved their value to the Indian Church by the sterling quality of their service and by the truly Christian ring of their message to India, that a certain theological amateurishness which has been pointed out may be pardoned as arising in part from their worthy desire to avoid the ecclesiasticism and compromise that have too often marred the Church's history. For ourselves this notable work, *Āśramas Past and Present* which we have only been able to read once, raises a doubt whether a wide response to their appeal for a large increase of Christian āśramas to provide particularly for the retirement period of Christian people, would be the most distinctive ministry that mature Christian men and women can render to India in its present need of mediation and leadership in every aspect of public life. Let us again emphasize that we have only been able to give this meaty book a single careful reading. But our mind goes back to such sentences as these on page 13 'God



fills men with nameless unrest, to wean them from the good, and lead them to the better. The Āryan felt this spiritual fever and registered a vow to sift the matter to the bottom when the duties of family life had been discharged. Then, he would go to the forest and think deep' Our interrogation mark is this. Has not God *in Christ* filled men with *rest* and *peace*? 'Come unto Me and I will give you rest. Learn of Me and ye shall find rest.' Has not the New Testament 'sifted' this and all such matters 'to the bottom'? Is there *still* need 'to go to the forest and think deep'?

### (5) *Unforgettable Indian Challenges*

In view of the appalling needs of millions of India's people, is 'the forest' the best place or method for Christian people to share with others the blessings they have found in Christ? We are not forgetful of the fact that in such Christian *āśramas* as are recommended by our three South Indian Christian leaders, practical service finds a place. Our query is. Does service find an *adequate* place in their *āśrama* programme for Christian people? We often find ourselves haunted by two unforgettable Indian challenges. One came from Sir Nārāyan Chandāvarkar who told a company of Indian Christians in our hearing that the greatest service they could render to India today would be to translate the message of Jesus into a wider campaign than ever for the uplift of their needy countrymen and countrywomen. The other challenge came from Sir Sarvapallī Rādhākṛishnan who told an All-India Y. M. C. A. gathering in Bombay that what he and many others want to see in India is a living *society* reformed and transfigured by the ethic and power and spirit of Jesus. Our haunting doubt is whether such a reshaping of *society* as both these Indian leaders requested can possibly be effected by Christians in or from any place of *retirement*. Every *true* Christian is impelled by the motive that inspires the world-famed medical missionary, Dr. Albert Schweitzer. One of

Europe's greatest musicians as well as a skilled doctor, he felt he must go and meet the medical needs of people in the African jungle. Therefore let Dr Schweitzer speak for us all 'It struck me as incomprehensible that I should be allowed to lead such a happy life, while so many people were wrestling with care and suffering

### (6) *A Challenge To India's Church*

Indian Christianity *can* certainly make an enriching contribution by means of all such ideals as are inspired by *āśrama* life, and one chief contribution will be in showing India and the world how to combine the ancient Indian ideal of meditation and contemplation with the modern ideal of such personal service as leads to *social reconstruction*. This combination of ideals every Christian should exemplify, and such a task need not be limited to those who have reached the retirement stage. Our three South Indian leaders can help us all by indicating what particular service can be rendered by Christian *āśramas* as distinct from what other Christian institutions do and can do. This we feel their rare book has not done adequately. Possibly such a distinctively Christian service might be in giving to caste ridden and communally minded India a new and convincing exhibition of brotherly love in all its possible manifestations. If we have rightly understood this fine book, we hope its next edition if we may venture another concrete suggestion will aim at enlisting the Christian *āśramas* to lead in a campaign of voluntary service which is so essential if India's growing Church is to fulfil its duty among a population advancing towards four hundred millions. The nearest approach to this we have seen is in two lovely stories we quote below. In other words, we would like to see these three keen minds work out a programme for the Christian *āśrama* spirit of meditation and of service, *instead of what appears to us to be a programme for an āśrama location*. If such a location is over-emphasized it will en

courage a fatal isolation from the millions of needy souls to whom every true Christian owes a 'debt' he *must* discharge. 'I pray not that Thou wilt take them out of the world' (St. John 17 : 15).

### (7) *Practical Service And Spiritual Worship*

One of the fourteen Christian *āśramas* described in the Madras book is the one at Tirupattur. Writing in *The Guardian* of Madras, the writer *Priyashishya* told the following two stories. 'On the day I reached the Tirupattur *āśrama*, there was a fire in a village and some thatched huts were burnt down. The stricken villagers did not go to their landlords or to the Christian pastor but marched straight into the *āśrama* knowing that their cry would not be in vain. The two brothers went into the city, gathered a band of young men, Hindus mostly, collected money, interviewed the officials and in a few hours arranged for the rebuilding of the houses. Not a merchant they visited refused to help, not an officer sent them away empty. The young men were ready to act under the direction of the *āśrama*. The spell of the *āśrama* has kindled in them a love for the pariah and a sympathy for his distress. This happened not in a town where men are liberalised but a provincial sub-town, caste-ridden and custom-driven.' The other story by *Priyashishya* tells of an experience which, he says, 'I am not tired of repeating, as a signal achievement of Tirupattur. When I entered the much maligned *āśrama*-temple, I saw something which I never found in the much belauded church. A Brāhmin was sitting, a little separate, lost in private devotion. A Brāhmin saying his prayers in a Christian church and feeling it all natural! Is this not a moral transformation beyond the imagination of the *routine* Church? As if this was not enough, next day, I saw in the congregation a grandmother, mother and granddaughter, singing hymns, reading the Scriptures and following the sermon with earnest attention. By their caste marks and

jewels, I could easily guess they belonged to the upper class, ordinarily least touched by Christian influences. They brought good things for their breakfast and served them themselves. When they went back, they left a thankoffering in three figures, with a request not to mention their names. I have heard it said that afflicted widows, Hindu widows, come to the church and pour their hearts out. Moved by curiosity I learnt the story of the three ladies I mentioned above. I heard something which I consider to be too sacred for print. It is in ministering to need that is too sacred to print that *true* religion always excels. Does any reader doubt this?

## 17 A Faith Born In Hell

Dr Charles E. Raven now Master of Christ's College, Cambridge, used to tell his students that 'only a faith that is born in hell can stand the strain of life' (*The Ashram Review* July 1941 p. 13). Perhaps that was the reason why Dnyāneshwar became such a flaming torch amid the darkness, ceremonialism and formalism of his time (see our pp. 293-5).<sup>1</sup> Certainly if we can let the creative Spirit of God lead us out of the present hell of civilization, we shall find ourselves enriched by a faith beyond all human explaining. In his recent book *The Hope Of A New World* a series of broadcast talks in late 1940 Dr William Temple, the Archbishop of York, finely observes: "I do not suppose that anyone is going to say again

"It does not matter what a man believes." It obviously matters a great deal to all of us what the Nazis believe. They believe it with great fervour and we are not going to extirpate their belief by a mild haze of cautiously held opinions. We are not fighting so much to preserve a Christian civilization, as for the opportunity to make one. Hence so many hold the conviction that their heritage of human freedom has in it values worth defending at the price of life itself and the loss of every thing. But Dr Temple rightly shows that the only guarantee of all such values is in the revelation made by God in Jesus'

Christ. And yet millions had begun to act and think in social life as if these values could be preserved apart from Christ's revelation of God. The very idea of freedom had become for many people altogether divorced from the idea of God until they were harshly pulled up by the dark event of 'total war.' What we need, says the Archbishop, is to 'organize our social relationship on the basis of the reign of God,' which simply means God Himself occupying the throne of Mansoul with man's free consent. This truth was fearlessly expressed in the House of Commons nearly four decades ago by Lord Hugh Cecil when he said that some 'men erect in the mansions of their hearts a splendid throne-room, in which they place objects revered and beautiful. *There* are laid the sceptre of righteousness and the swords of justice and mercy. *There* is the purple robe that speaks of the unity of love and power, and *there* is the throne that teaches the supreme moral governance of the world. And that room is decorated by all that is most lovely in art and literature. It is gemmed by all the jewels of imagination and knowledge. Yet that noble chamber, with all its beauty, its glorious regalia, its solitary throne, is still an empty room' (*The Young Men of India, Burma And Ceylon*, July, 1941, pp 133-4). One reason why in so many hearts today there is a 'solitary throne, an empty room,' is that so much passing for theology and philosophy so-called is missing its mark. It is theology and philosophy without any dynamic.

## 18. The Remedy For Dryasdust Theology

### (1) 'Possible That Something May Exist'

Dnyāneshwar himself would have been amused and shocked by turns at the lifelessness and vagaries of much present-day theological study as illustrated in one of the latest books entitled *The Study Of Theology*. It was published in Britain and America in May 1939, shortly before the war broke out and numbers 484 pages, its editor being Dr. Kenneth

Escott Kirk, the Bishop of Oxford The opening contribution and the longest in the book bears the title, 'What Is Theology?' and is written by Dr N P Williams, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in Oxford University On page 68 Dr Williams makes the following significant observation 'The present writer has been assured by an academic teacher of philosophy that the only proposition which could be said after two milleniums and a half of intensive speculation carried on by the most powerful minds of Europe, to be generally accepted and agreed upon by philosophers of all schools of thought, amounts to no more than this—"it is possible that something may exist." No wonder some theological seminaries are occasionally characterized as theological cemeteries !

## (2) *Creative Experiments Of The Holy Spirit*

Such an admission demonstrates the fact, if indeed, demonstration were needed, that apart from the guiding and inspiring Spirit of God in the hearts of men neither West nor East can make any progress in the pilgrimage after truth. Fortunately in the same volume there is such an essay as that on The New Testament by the constructive Christian scholar Dr C. H. Dodd of Cambridge, whose first sentence tells us that Christian theology is the attempt to understand the content of a divine revelation given in history and who shows that the New Testament writings are a first hand record of the creative period of the Church in which the springs of its life are laid bare. Dr Dodd adds that the New Testament offers the indispensable, and irreplaceable foundation upon which the Christian theologian must build and his final sentence declares that 'as the fact of Christ was made known to apostles and evangelists by the Spirit, so the same Spirit in the Church is guiding us into all truth The same sovereign remedy for religious barrenness was presented to the Bangalore Continuation Conference Jubilee Celebration in June this year (1941) by Judge P. Chenchiah who stated 'Jesus is the representative of

a new man in the march of evolution. The new man and with it the new universe will emerge after His pattern as the cupola and climax of evolution. The Holy Spirit, the creator of the new cosmos, has begun with a new person and will end with a new earth and heaven. Christianity is the reproduction of new life, acquisition of new endowments, powers, instincts and capacities. As in the case of man, Christ can only be reproduced. Here Christianity passes into the realm of investigation and experiment. Hinduism in its deepest aspects believes that there is such a thing as a science of the soul, science which concerns itself with the springs of life. Should this type of Christianity emerge, as I hope it will in the *āśramas*, we shall witness the deep calling unto deep, *yoga* attracting *yoga*. The finest souls of India are again getting interested in the new-life experiment as they did in the days of the Upanishads. In the new *yoga*, Christ as the historical figure, who conquered death and in His resurrection life illustrated the practicability of eternal life on earth, will lead the research and crown it with success. It is my firm conviction that Christianity will triumph in India as it never did in the past in other lands by leading the best men of India into the creative experiments of the Holy Spirit' (Madras *Guardian*, July 10, 1941, p. 317).

## 19 'The Dynamic Of God'

If only Dnyāneshwar could have known of them we believe his whole being would have been thrilled by the conception embodied in the four words at the head of this paragraph. They indicate one way of translating two of St. Paul's words in the 16th verse of the 1st chapter of 'Romans'. They form the basis of a moving article by that veteran worker in the East, Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer. In his article Dr. Zwemer answers those who are said by one scholar to present 'Christianity without Christ's Cross or His Resurrection, without the Holy Spirit and His grace.' This 'is not

Christianity, but a religion of humanitarianism. To all those who would content themselves with 'a religion of humanitarianism' Dr Zwemer commends the wise and far-seeing words of an experienced Indian missionary who said about Muslims what we here apply also to work among Hindus 'the Muslim and the Hindu will not suffer theological questions to be shelved, and it is because they are so frequently shelved by Christians that Muslims and Hindus tend to become more and more confirmed in their own views. Often the theological enthusiasm of Muslims or Hindus is in strange contrast to a certain rationalizing laicism in reluctant advocates of an attenuated Christianity. If the Christian is content to be silent about great New Testament doctrines, this will not propitiate the Muslim or Hindu or make him ready to accept Christian truth. He will continue his triumphant way till he has silenced the Christian. In his dealings with Muslims and Hindus what the Christian needs is not less theology but more and better theology. Moreover to impose on ourselves a silence with respect to our theology is not honest and does not do justice to the intellectual travail of Christianity. It will result in our becoming more inarticulate than we already are. These things, let us repeat, apply to Hindus and Muslims alike. For we are sent,' in the words of Hugh Thomson Kerr, 'not to preach sociology but salvation not economics but evangelism not reform but redemption not culture but conversion not progress but pardon, not the new social order but the new birth not revolution but regeneration not renovation but revival not resuscitation but resurrection not a new organization but a new creation not democracy but the Gospel not civilization but Christ. We are ambassadors, not diplomats.'

## 20 The Dynamic Of Prayer

### (1) *Dnyāneshwar's 'Ecstasy'*

In concluding our imperfect book, we come back to the thought that probably we should regard Dnyāneshwar's most



abiding contribution to be on the possibilities of communion with and concentration upon God. For the last glimpse the world had of Dnyāneshwar was probably as he sat in the ecstasy of devotion in preparation for his *samādhi* or end. For the word '*samādhi*' has two distinct usages: contemplation and self-immolation (see Appendix). Our section on Dnyāneshwar's entombment alive (pp. 66-68) has shown that it was in profoundest contemplation, reaching probably to the ecstatic condition, that Dnyāneshwar prepared for the closing in of his tomb or final resting-place. There are of course differences of opinions about the manner of his end. Mr. M. D. Altekar, e. g., doubts whether Dnyāneshwar was buried alive (see our p. 76). But the ecstasy of meditation is the probably accepted view of how the poet prepared for his end. If there is one lesson above all others that our over-busy age needs to learn it is surely this very lesson of the dynamic possibilities of meditation and prayer.

## (2) *Isaac The 5th Century Abbot*

The dynamic possibilities of prayer have never been set forth more fruitfully than by the life and work of two men belonging to the middle East who both bore the name of Isaac. One was Isaac the Abbot in the Egyptian desert, whose fifth century Conferences on Prayer recorded by Cassian 'had enormous influence' says Dr. Hastings' *Encyclopaedia Of Religion And Ethics* (volume ix, pp. 91-2). Isaac the Abbot emphasized that prayer is not uniform but takes various forms according to our need and the inspiration of the Spirit of God. It always 'depends on the degree of purity attained,' and he shows that 'out of any form of prayer most fervent and fiery prayers may surge up, so that the soul, after the manner of an incomprehensible and devouring flame, flies forth beyond all things, and pours out unspeakable prayers which the Holy Spirit supplies, so that not only the mouth cannot speak them all, but the mind cannot recall them afterwards. This fiery

prayer, known to few and ineffable, transcends all human sense, and is described by no sound of voice or movement of tongue, but the mind is illumined by a celestial light. The means of attaining to continual prayer, so far as this is possible, is by short but fervent prayer. The most useful ejaculation is

"O God, make speed to save me. O Lord, make haste to help me." It is wrong to have any imaginary form of God before the eyes (John Chapman's article in *E R E.*, vol. ix., pp. 91-92)

### (3) *Isaac Of Nineveh*

In an enriching message under the title *First Things In Missions* which all Christian workers the world over will do well to take to heart, Sister Adehne who is associated with the *Christa Prema Seva Sangha* in the City of Poona, shows what dynamical values issued from the prayer life of Isaac of Nineveh, a bishop in Syria who fled from honours after five months' experience of them and 'whose writings on prayer are now the daily bread of the Orthodox Church of the East. In one place Isaac the Syrian reminds his readers of the strenuousness of the prayer life in these words. How many times, when a man wishes to begin some work for the Lord he asks whether there is comfort in the thing or whether it is possible to accomplish it easily .. What doest thou O man? Dost thou wish to ascend unto Heaven and to receive the Kingdom which is there and communion with God and spiritual comforts and that blessedness, and mingling with the angels and immortal life? And dost thou ask whether there is trouble in the way? When asked by a disciple what was the loftiest summit in the labours of asceticism, St. Isaac replied 'When he is deemed worthy of constant prayer. When he has reached this, he has touched the end of all virtues and forthwith he has a spiritual dwelling place. If a man has not received in truth the gift of the Comforter it is not possible for him to accomplish constant prayer in quiet. When the

Spirit takes His dwelling-place in a man he does not cease to pray, because the Spirit will constantly pray in him. Then, neither when he sleeps nor when he is awake will prayer be cut off from his soul; but when he eats and when he drinks, when he lies down or when he does any work, even when he is immersed in sleep, the perfumes of prayer will breathe in his soul spontaneously. And henceforth he will not possess prayer at limited times, but always; and when he has outward rest, even then prayer is ministered to him secretly. For the silence of the serene is prayer, says a man clad with Christ. For their deliberations are divine impulses. The motions of the pure mind are quiet voices with which they secretly chant psalms to the Invisible One' (*International Review Of Missions*, April 1941, p. 215).

## 21. A Debtor To Prayer

The two foregoing paragraphs about the two saintly Isaacs of the Middle East have brought home afresh to the present writer his well-nigh infinite debt to two other Isaacs of a later day. In 1845 there was born in England a humble man of God named Isaac Edwards who in 1875 had born to him a son he called James. The latter is now writing this closing paragraph, and he remembers the profound impression made upon him when told that he was dedicated to God in the very hour of his birth, he also places on record his unshaken impression that had it not been for the parental example of private prayer and family prayer all through his youth he would probably never have seen India as a missionary. His coming to India was only made possible by the truly missionary act of his younger brother Isaac who nobly accepted the responsibility of caring for their father and mother, thereby enabling ourselves to come and work among one of the loveliest peoples in the world.

## APPENDIX

### Note On Samādhi As Ecstasy

1 The word *Samādhi* has the following distinct usages. This word is used for a state of contemplation absorption or ecstasy in which contemplation is often consummated. The word is also used in the sense of self immolation by drowning or burying oneself alive when in deep and devout meditation also to describe the small edifice containing the *Tulsi* plant erected over a *Sannyāsi's* burial place.

2 In his delightful eight anna book of 60 pages entitled *The Art Of Contemplation* published in 1931 by the Association Press, Calcutta J C Winslow has the following on Ecstasy. "We pass to consider the last of the *ashtāṅg* of Patanjali, that trance-like state which is known to Christian mystics as "ecstasy" and in the *Yoga Sūtra* is called (*samādhi*) ..*Samādhi* is defined by Patanjali as follows *tadevārthamātra nirbhāsam svarūpashūnyamiva samādhi* that is to say "The same" (*viz.*, contemplation) when illuminated by the object alone, devoid, as it were of itself is *samādhi*." Vyāsa's interpretation of this is When, on account of the object of contemplation taking entire possession of the mind, contemplation shows forth only the light of the form of the contemplated object, and is devoid as it were, of its nature of self-cognition, then it is called *samādhi*.

"Two points are here emphasized. *First* that contemplation of which we were thinking has now deepened to such a degree of intense concentration that the mind is entirely filled with the object of contemplation. *Secondly* as a result of this entire pre-occupation it becomes, as it were, devoid of itself that is, the ordinary consciousness has been entirely superseded.

' Now compare this definition of Patanjali's with that of the Jesuit Poulain, in his well-known treatise of mystical theology, and we shall see the closeness of the resemblance. He writes: "Supernatural ecstasy is a state that, not only at the outset, but during its whole existence, contains two essential elements: the *first*, which is interior and invisible, is a very intense attention to some religious subject; the *second*, which is corporeal and visible, is the alienation of the sensible faculties."

' Similarly Miss Evelyn Underhill, the well-known writer on mystical subjects, writes of "those definitely ecstatic states in which the concentration of interest on the Transcendent is so complete, the gathering up and pouring out of life on this one point so intense, that the subject is entranced, and becomes, for the time of ecstasy, wholly unconscious of the external world. In pure contemplation he refused to attend to that external world: it was there, a blurred image, at the fringe of, his conscious field, but he deliberately left it on one side. In ecstasy he *cannot* attend to it. None of its messages reach him: not even those most insistent of all which are translated into the terms of bodily pain."

' It is clear from the above definitions that there are in mystical ecstasy two aspects which may be considered separately, the psycho-physical aspect and the spiritual, which is the mystical aspect proper. Let me say a few words about each of these. *First*, as to the psycho-physical aspect. In this aspect ecstasy exhibits all the ordinary features of a trance. It may come on gradually, as contemplation deepens into the ecstatic state; or it may arrive suddenly, seeming to snatch away the mystic's normal consciousness in a moment, in which case it is called "rapture." Both the breathing and the circulation of the blood become very slow, and seem as if almost arrested. The body remains cold and rigid in the position that it occupied at the onset of the trance. The senses

cease to register any impressions. There may be a short period in which some slight consciousness remains, but this is usually followed by a longer period of complete unconsciousness, lasting perhaps for hours or days. In this condition the mystic is impervious even to the sensations of pain. For instance, the well known Christian mystic, Sūdhū Sunder Singh, was on one occasion caught up into a rapture while sitting under a tree, and hornets stung him on different parts of his body without his feeling it.

Now it is important to bear in mind that, in Miss Evelyn Underhill's words, "such ecstasy as this, so far as its merely physical symptoms go, is not of course the peculiar privilege of the mystics. It is an abnormal bodily state, caused by a psychic state and this causal psychic state may be healthy or unhealthy, the result of genius or disease. It is common in the strange and little understood type of personality called "sensitive" or mediumistic it is a well known symptom of certain mental and nervous illnesses. A feeble mind concentrated on one idea, like a hypnotic subject gazing at one spot, easily becomes entranced, however trivial the idea which gained possession of his consciousness. Taken alone, then, and apart from its content, ecstasy carries no guarantee of spiritual value.

The value, then of the mystical ecstasy depends, not on its psycho-physical aspect as a trance, but on its spiritual aspect, which we must now consider. In this aspect, then, ecstasy must be regarded as the supreme quickening of the spiritual vision. The spiritual consciousness becomes enormously enlarged and clarified, so that it has an intuitive perception of truths which the normal and unaided intellect cannot grasp, and still less express. More than this, in the moment of ecstasy the mystic feels that, in an indescribable but indubitable manner he has attained to union with the Divine Reality which is his Source and Origin; in Dante's words, he is "engulfed in

the very thing for which he longs, which is God." "Oh, wonder of wonders," cries Eckhart, "when I think of the union the soul has with God! He makes the enraptured soul to flee out of herself, for she is no more satisfied with anything that can be named. The spring of Divine Love flows out of the soul and draws her out of herself into the unnamed being, into her first Source, which is God alone "

'Quotations could, of course, be multiplied indefinitely to describe this supersensual experience of union with God into which the great mystics enter at the time of ecstasy. Let me choose another from the Italian poet-mystic, Jacopone da Todì: "The mind's activity is all lulled to rest. Wrapped in God, it can no longer find itself So deeply engulfed is it in that ocean that it can find no place whence it may issue thence. Of itself it cannot think, nor can it tell what form it has, because, transformed, it hath another vesture. All its perceptions have gone forth to gaze upon the good, and contemplate that Beauty which hath no likeness."

'He continues, in a very fine passage: "The doors are flung wide. The soul hath been joined to God, and possesses all that is of God It feels that which is felt not, sees that which it knew not, possesses that which it believed not, tastes though it savours not. Because without measure it is lost to itself, it possesses that height of unmeasured Perfection. Because it has not retained in itself the mixture of any other thing, it has received in abundance that imageless God."

'There may be other accompaniments of ecstasy besides this simple awareness of God, this sense of most intimate union with Him. Many of the mystics have at such times seen visions or heard voices, not indeed with the physical, but, with the spiritual senses. Others, like S. Francis of Assisi and S. Catherine of Siena, have during such ecstasy received in their hands and feet marks like those made in the hands and feet of Christ when He was nailed to the Cross. Others have,

attained various kinds of miraculous powers, called in the *Yoga-Sūtra vibhūti*, as, for instance, that known as *laghimā* or "levitation," in which the body seems to take on an extreme lightness, and often even to be lifted up into the air. But these accompaniments of the ecstasy do not constitute its essential value. That is always to be found in the great access of illumination and of spiritual strength which results. As illustrating the sense of this access of illumination this clear insight into the true nature of things, I may quote the wellknown lines from Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey." He speaks of

That blessed mood  
 In which the burden of the mystery,  
 In which the heavy and the weary weight  
 Of all this unintelligible world  
 Is lightened that serene and blessed mood,  
 In which the affections gently lead us on,  
 Until the breath of this corporeal frame  
 And even the motion of our human blood  
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
 In body and become a living soul  
 While, with an eye made quiet by the power  
 Of harmony and the deep power of joy  
 We see into the life of things."

In illustration of the sense of the access of spiritual strength, let me quote the words of Sādhu Sunder Singh. "The gift of ecstasy which God has given me," he says, "is more precious than any earthly home could ever be. In it I find a joy so wonderful that it transcends all others. During the fourteen years that I have been living as a *sādhu* there have often been times when the stress of hunger, thirst, and persecution might have tempted me to give up this way of life, had I not just then received the grace of ecstasy. I would not exchange this gift for the whole world



"While the mind is separated from itself," says Richard of S. Victor, "and while it is borne away into the secret place of the divine mystery and is surrounded on all sides by the fire of divine love, it is inwardly penetrated and inflamed by this fire, and utterly puts off itself and puts on a divine love, and, being conformed to that beauty which it has beheld, it passes utterly into that other glory "'

3 In his earlier 1926 book, *The Indian Mystic* (pp 65-67), J. C. Winslow has the following:—'What then, of *samādhī*, that state of ecstasy in which contemplation culminates? Is not this the state in which these miraculous powers are said to be attained? It is quite true that it is to this last stage of the *yogic* experience that these powers are particularly said to belong. It is also to the condition of ecstasy that the Christian mystics have been accustomed to look for their times of special revelations and of special spiritual refreshment. My reason for speaking of these under the head of contemplation was that, whilst contemplation is for all and is certainly accompanied by some real measure of divine renewal, it has always been a debated point how far the condition of ecstasy ought to be generally sought or desired. On the whole, the consensus of opinion among Christian mystics of the West would seem to be that, whilst they would certainly discourage the seeking of visions, voices or revelations (which are as likely to be diabolic as heavenly), the state of ecstasy itself is one which the pilgrim of the contemplative way need not shrink from desiring, if it be God's will for him. This is quite different from encouraging one who is without moral discipline or training in the spiritual life to start trying to induce a state of trance by any kind of self-hypnotism, a practice which all would agree to be most dangerous. Similarly, a Hindu teacher of *yoga* would never permit a disciple to go forward to the higher stages without the most thorough training in the earlier ascetic discipline. But there seems no reason why one who is giving a disciplined Christian life of prayer and service should

not be glad if there come to him times of such refreshment and insight. N V Tilak had also ( but not I believe, with great frequency ) such times of ecstasy during one of which he had the vision of Christ which decided him to become a *sannyāsi*. He has written of one such time in the poem *Love & Samādhi*:

Ah love, I sink in the timeless sleep,  
 Sink in the timeless sleep !  
 One Image stands before my eyes  
 And thrills my bosom & deep  
 One Vision bathes in radiant light  
 My spirit's palace-halls.  
 All stir of hands, all throb of brain  
 Quivers, and sinks, and falls.  
 My soul fares forth no fetters now  
 Bind me to this world's shore.  
 Sleep ! I would sleep ! In pity spare !  
 Let no man wake me more !

4 In view of all the foregoing it is in no way surprising to find that when a *sannyāsi* dies, he is said to have attained *samādhi*:

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## APPENDIX B

### Chokhāmēlā · The Out-Caste Saint Of The 14th Century

1. On pages 49, 86, 355, 359 and 361 we have referred to the Mahār Saint Chokhāmēlā who died at Mangalvedha in 1338 A D, forty-two years after the generally accepted date of Dnyāneshwar's end. From two references, those on pp. 49 and 86, it would appear that Chokhāmēlā *may* have been a contemporary of Dnyāneshwar, as he was also of Nāmdev who died in 1350 and who is usually regarded as a close companion of Dnyāneshwar. On pp. 355, 359 and 361 we have referred to one of the best known incidents in the entire history of the relations for centuries past between caste people and out-castes, the incident when the (now) widely revered Mahār Saint Chokhāmēlā was disallowed any entrance into Vithobā's temple. Since the above-mentioned pages were printed, indeed as the Index to the present book was being prepared, there appeared in Poona the striking Cinema Film Picture of Chokhāmēlā. We write these lines during the very first week of this picture which we went to see on its fifth day. That the picture promises to be almost if not quite as popular as were the similar pictures of Tukārām in 1937 and Dnyāneshwar in 1940 (see our Chapter III, pp 33-46) would appear to be indicated by the fact that people who went to see the Chokhāmēlā picture before the end of the first week, and who arrived well before the hour announced, found it impossible to get any seats.

2. Since the caste-conditions prevailing in the days of Dnyāneshwar (see our pp 37, 75, 96, chapters XVIII-XX, XXVI section (5), pp 456-462) were similar to those in the

days of the persecuted Chokhāmēlā, it is worth while recalling the main features of Chokhāmēlā's life. Those who would make a study of the Mahār problem, as it needs to be studied if any worthy Indian nation is to be built, should without fail read and master the able book by our friend the Rev Alexander Robertson, *The Mahār Folk* pp. 101, published for two rupees by the Y. M. C. A. Publishing House, 5 Russell St., Calcutta, in 1938 as one of The Religious Life Of India Series, its sub-title being A Study Of Untouchables In Mahārāshtra. This book is packed with invaluable information from end to end and is without doubt one of the classic books on India, without which no one can fully comprehend many essential aspects of the daily life of Dnyāneshwar's people. Inviting to the student of Marāṭhi as are many of the questions raised by Mr Robertson's notable book, it will suffice for the general reader to follow Chokhāmēlā's misfortunes as sketched by Mahipati though other strands of information are found in the writings of Nāmdev and Eknāth. Mahipati's Marāṭhi account is translated in full in chapter XXIII of vol 9 of our Poet Saints of Mahārāshtra Series, being the first volume of *Stories Of Indian Saints* pp. 377-384. Those pages in our 1933 book are translated from Mahipati's *Bhaktavijaya* chapter XXIII 6-91.

3 Space forbids giving Chokhāmēlā's life in any detail. Those of our readers who are interested in noting how the Indian Film Picture of today is portraying the leaders of India's past, need only compare Mahipati's 80 or 90 verses with the fascinating Talkie Film which entrances all who sit watching and listening for two hours and a half. Suffice for our present purpose to reproduce here the English summary of the 30 page Marāṭhī account on sale at the Cinema entrance for two annas. That summary is as follows

Chokhāmēlā, a Mahār Saint and a poet, was a great humanitarian and a preacher of the gospel of equality and

universal brotherhood,' according to this deeply interesting Talkie Film 'Chief amongst the opponents of Chokhāmēlā was Bindumādhav. He was an orthodox Brāhmin, a great Pandit and well versed in the Hindu scriptures. But his own son Anant Pandit was a disciple of Chokhāmēlā. Chokhāmēlā's usual duty was to clean the road leading to Pāndurang's temple in Pandharpūr and he always took pride in executing that particular duty. One day, while he was engaged in his usual duty, a rag on the road was tossed by a sweep of Chokhāmēlā and touched Bindumādhav, who was just entering the temple. From that day Chokhāmēlā was prohibited to clean the road.

'According to a custom of the untouchables of Pandharpūr a buffalo was sacrificed before their goddess, Marī Āī, every year on a particular day.' The Talkie Film presents the situation that arose as follows:—'Chokhāmēlā thought the sacrifice of a dumb animal was inhuman, and he tried to persuade his community to his own point of view, and was wonderfully successful in his attempt, so much so, that the only person who had the privilege of sacrificing the animal flatly refused to be a party to it. There was a great commotion at Pandharpūr, the ultimate result of which was that Chokāmēlā was driven out of Pandharpūr.

'Not only the untouchable community, but all the men and women in Pandharpūr honestly believed that the above act of Chokhāmēlā would incur the wrath of Marī Āī and invite a great calamity over the whole of Pandharpūr. And as it would happen, actually an epidemic of a deadly disease of cattle began to rage over the town. A great number of cattle were dead. Chokhāmēlā removed the dead bodies of cattle from the town expeditiously, though the duty did not belong to his community. And so the town was saved from destruction. Anant Pandit was a great help to Chokhāmēlā in this act. When this news reached Bindumādhav, that his son Anant

helped Chokhāmēlā in removing dead cattle, he became so furious that he drove his son out of the house.

Anant Pandit then became the writer of Chokhamelā, and he spread his philosophy by reciting his *Abhangas*. One day as usual Anant Pandit was entering the temple of Pandurang but he was prohibited by orthodox Brahmins. There followed a great fight of words between Anant Pandit and these orthodox Brahmins in which his father Bindumādhav took part. Anant Pandit became excited and he was determined with his untouchable brothers to enter the temple. Chokhamelā persuaded them from doing so, and he preached that God was with them and that He was not in the temple then why hurt the feelings of a great community? Many people challenged Chokhāmēlā's statement and demanded of him to show Pandurang in their midst. People then saw Pandurang's *Vaiṣṇavī Mala* [Vishnu's necklace with five precious stones] around the neck of Chokhāmēlā, and on a charge of theft [i.e., of having stolen the necklace] he was sentenced to be dragged on the rough roads, tied to the legs of a bullock. But by the grace of God he was not killed.

In the closing days of his life, Chokhāmēlā with his fellow workers was on duty building a great wall around Mangalvedha. While the construction of the wall was in progress, it collapsed and many workers were buried alive under it. Chokhāmēlā was one among them. His remains were recognised by Namdev another great saint of his time, and a *samādhi* was erected on them near Vitthoba's temple.

# EPILOGUE

## THE UNSCALED EVEREST OF MARĀTHĪ LITERATURE

### 1 The TREND Of Marāthī Religious Thought

The completion of this volume on Dnyāneshwar fulfils an earnest request made to us by the late Dr J. N. Farquhar nearly twenty years ago. The learned doctor had himself written an over-generous review of the English book we had completed in December 1921 entitled *The Life And Teaching Of Tukārām* and he pleaded with us to take up some other of the Marāthī Poet Saints. We told him we held the view that a simple mnemonic of five letters, making the word *TREND*, covered the greatest names in Marāthī Literature, viz, **T** for **Tukārām**, **R** for **Rāmdās**, **E** for **Eknāth**, **N** for **Nāmdev**, and **D** for **Dnyāneshwar**, and that the whole *TREND* of Marāthī thought and religion was to be gathered from these five great poets. We quickly realized how completely we had played into his hands, for he at once retorted 'You have produced a textbook on the first letter of the five. Why not take in hand the last one?' It was just as if we had been commanded—since a request from Dr Farquhar was always regarded as a command—to climb Everest itself. Before many days had passed, a letter from him brought a formal request, a request which remained unanswered right up to the great scholar's death some years later, it seemed so impossible of achievement, as impossible as the mighty Everest in the Himālayas. After the founder and the Pandit of this series had also passed away, the former on June 19, 1932 and the latter on February 16, 1934, what

had been an imperious challenge now became a solemn duty' as no Poet Saints Of Mahārāshtra Series could be complete without a volume on the Father of Marāṭhī Literature, as Dnyāneshwar must undoubtedly be regarded. We could have wished this present volume had been far more worthy of the three noble scholars who first conceived its possibility. The Everest of Marāṭhī Literature remains unscaled.

## 2. Origin And Progress Of The Poet Saints Of Mahārāshtra Series

In the publication of this volume on Dnyāneshwar there are completed the first twelve volumes of the Poet Saints Of Mahārāshtra Series the first volume of which appeared in 1926. They had their origin in a series of fifteen one-column articles which we succeeded in persuading Dr Justin E. Abbott to contribute to the English columns of the *Dnyāno daya* in 1921. During our visit to Mahāleshwar in mid December 1920 we managed to win Mrs Abbott's co-operation in persuading the learned scholar to lay aside his modesty by contributing a weekly article on the Poet Saints with a view if these proved acceptable to readers, to a series of books later. When Mrs Abbott passed away on June 26, 1921 the bereaved doctor regarded his promise as sacred with the result that the books began to appear five years later. Working on these in Summit New Jersey U. S. A., he was successful in obtaining as his collaborator in India the able Pandit N. R. Godbole and as his proof-corrector Dr Nicol Macnicol, who saw the first four volumes through the press *Bhānudas Eknāth Bhīkshugītā* and *Dāsopant Digambar*. From 1929 until the doctor's death in 1932 this task fell into our hands, save for two volumes (*Stotramālā* and *Tukārām*) proof read by Dr Deming while we were on furlough when we had a month's stimulating fellowship and study with Dr Abbott in his own American home. In addition to the work



on *Bahinābāi* which we edited in 1929, we have ourselves been responsible for the volumes *Rāmdās, Stories Of Indian Saints* (two vols), *Nectar From Indian Saints* and now the present work on Dnyāneshwar. As these last five volumes have been published since Dr. Abbott's death, three of them since the death of the faithful Pandit, our task has been the much more onerous one of filling up big gaps in the MSS and for the present volume we are of course responsible, except for the portions indicated in the Preface. The preparation of these books has been a liberal education and, incidentally, of priceless value in our other two spheres of work, editorial and theological. In view of the clear testimony of our great Marāthī Christian poet, Nārāyan Vāman Tilak, that 'it was across the bridge of Tukārām's verse' that he 'came to Christ,' we reaffirm the position with which, in 1921, we closed our article on Tukārām in the twelfth volume of Dr. James Hastings' *Encyclopaedia Of Religion And Ethics*, that a knowledge of the Marāthī Poet Saints, 'at least in their English translation, should be regarded as an indispensable preparation for missionary work among their people. That nearly three centuries ago' these poets 'should have proclaimed so clearly the inefficacy of all merely external rites and should have insisted so constantly on inward experience as the one essential of true religion offers to the Christian evangelist a most useful point of contact with the people of India.'

### 3. Bombay University Vice-Chancellor On Missionary Influence

On February 2 last year (1940) public appreciation found expression regarding the Poet Saints Series and the generosity of the worthy scholar who inaugurated the Series. On this occasion a very great tribute was paid by the Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University, Mr. R. P. Masānī, to the work and influence of the missionaries connected with the

American Marāṭhi Mission for the past few decades. The occasion was the unveiling of Prof S K. Pimpalkhare's life-like oil portrait of Dr Abbott at the headquarters of the Indian Historical Research Society which bears the name *Bhārat Itihāsa Samśhodhaka Mandal* to which Dr Abbott left a legacy on his death in 1932 which has given the *Mandal* over Rs. 50 000. An impressive company had gathered of Poona scholars and admirers of Marāṭhi literature from many walks of life. After a full and luminous statement by Professor D V Potdar the Vice Chancellor called upon the present writer to speak and we gave a few personal reminiscences of Dr Abbott illustrating his great devotion to what he always called the *Sevā Mārga* the Life of Practical Service, as distinct from the paths of knowledge, works and devotion known in India as *Dnyān Mārga*, *Karma Mārga* and *Bhakti Mārga*. In his speech following the unveiling of the portrait Mr Masani told the learned company of his lifelong debt to the missionaries of the American Marāṭhi Mission whose spirit of service had brought to him a great stimulus all his life. The Mahāmshtrian leader Mr N C. Kelkar of *Kesari* fame and President of the *Mandal* also paid his tribute.

#### -4 The Future Task Of The Poet Saints Translator And Interpreter

We are frequently asked how many more volumes are to be included in the Poet Saints Series. If the answer to that question were to be determined solely by the extent and value of the Marāṭhi poetry still awaiting translation and exposition even apart from other vital factors calling for consideration a vista would be opened up of many years of happy toil in these fruitful fields. But several of the volumes also need reprinting with the addition of facts available from recent research. Not a few of the existing volumes would also provide the basis for translation into highly useful works in

Maiāthī if adapted as textbooks for workers, e g., for this purpose a Marāthī adaptation of the present book on Dnyāneshwar has already been taken in hand. There is, besides, most urgent need for a comprehensive work surveying the entire field of the Poet Saints from the Christian standpoint and relating the enriching message of these earnest pilgrims of eternity to the New Testament message. These and many other aspects of this fascinating subject might well occupy several writers for many years if only the opportunity and leisure were available. Moreover, it must have been noted that the Series contains no separate volume on Nāmdev, though several chapters in vol. IX, *Stories Of Indian Saints*, are given up to the Nāmdev story. Nor will Dnyāneshwar students need reminding that seventeen out of the eighteen chapters of the unique poem, *Dnyāneshwarī*, still present to the English translator an unaccepted challenge to unfold their wealth, and that other great poems of Dnyāneshwar receive only passing mention, e g., the *Amitānubhav*. And many other treasures there are in the gold mine of Marāthī literature which remain all unexplored by English readers.

## 5. The Chief Unsolved Problem Of Poet Saints' Study

Over and beyond all such needs there is what is perhaps the greatest of all unsolved problems in the study of Mahārāshtrian Hindu *bhakti*, viz., the problem of how to avoid interpreting the Hindu ideas in the Marāthī Poet-Saints by means of Christian terms. Very little has been done on this essential aspect of Poet Saints' study, but it is an imperative and paramount duty on the part of missionaries and Indian Christian workers among the Marāthī-speaking people. For it is not only intellectually dishonest, but spiritually misleading also, to ascribe Christian meanings to Hindu terminology. It may be regarded as axiomatic that Christian and Hindu terms are never identical in their religious significance. Hence

the valuable service rendered by the Rev M P Davis, D D of Mahasamund C. P in the September 1941 *N C C Review* ( p. 435 ) where, after referring to Dr Otto's learned volumes including the book *Indian Grace Religions And Christianity* Dr Davis goes on to say " During a visit in Marburg in 1935 we conversed about similarities in terminology of the Hindu and the Christian religion. He ( Dr Otto ) then told me that he once thought that similar terms in both religions meant almost the same thing but that after studying Sanskrit he came to a quite different conclusion, verified by a long visit in India with residence in various Shankara and Rāmānuja āshrams where he made intensive studies from just this angle of apparent similarities in terminology. Hence he speaks in his *Ur Gītā And Commentary* written in 1935 of words and terms having a variety of meanings changeable as a chameleon. Especially is this the case, he says when speaking of " grace," for just here is revealed the "very deepest difference" (*Grace Religions* p. 64). Again and again in our own studies of the Marāṭhi Poet Saints the past twenty five years we have come right up against this far reaching question and here and there we have dropped words of warning regarding the different meanings of similar terms but the whole question calls for exhaustive treatment. All such considerations help to illustrate how steep and rugged is the road leading to the unscaled summit of the Everest of Marāṭhi Literature.

## 6 The Aim Of The Poet Saints Series

We have referred to the memorable month we spent in happy intimate fellowship with the fine Christian gentleman and scholar who inaugurated this Series and who left the wherewithal for its continuance. Often have we felt inspired by the nobility and loftiness of the ideals Dr Abbott expressed in those thirty days of study and companionship and whenever we desire to clarify what should be the ideal and goal of this Poet

Saints Series we recall the closing paragraph from Dr Abbott as he laid down his pen after quarter of a century's service as English Editor of the *Dnyānodaya* (or *Rise Of Knowledge*) Here it is as Dr. Abbott wrote it on March 31, 1910 'The greatest privilege of our twenty-five years of editorship of this paper we count that of holding up to Indian thought the ideals that Christ brought to the world Mindful though we are of the many noble ideals to be found in India's sacred literature and in the lives of her spiritually great men, yet Christ does stand supreme, and the world will not and cannot reach its goal until it makes Christ the ideal of its life '

Poona  
September 1941

J F Edwards

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